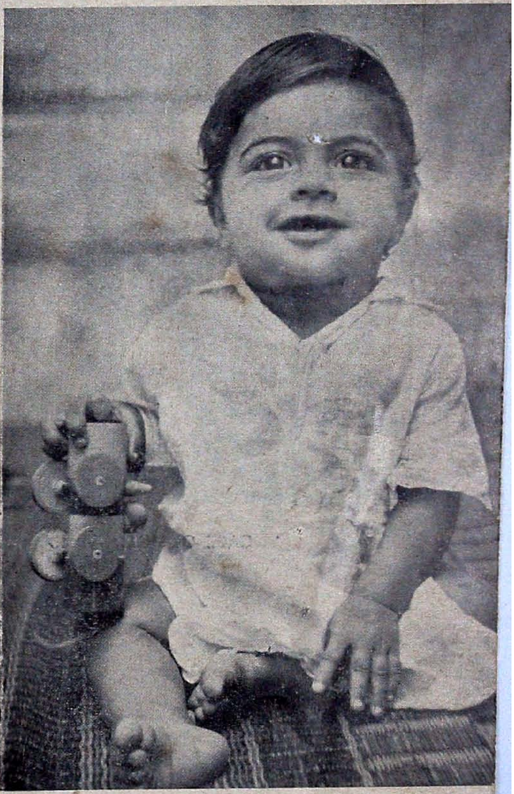
WOMEN'S WELFARE JOURNAL

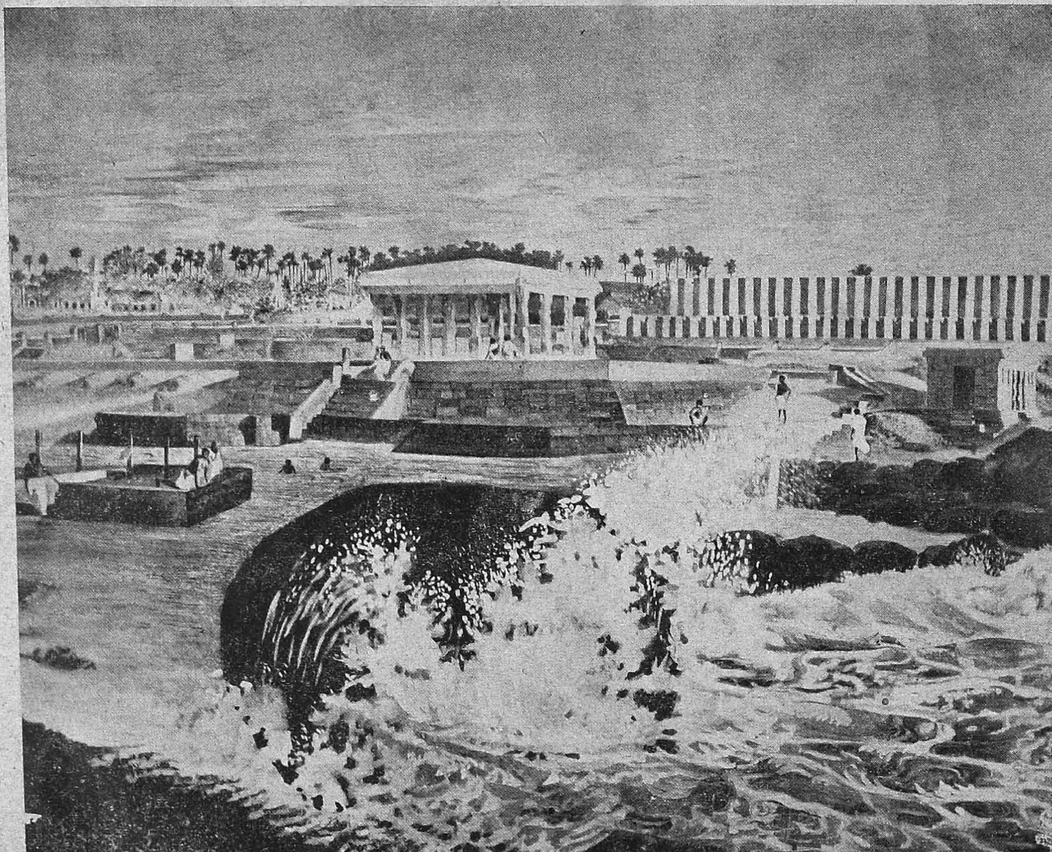
SEPTEMBER 1953 Price 3 an





SRICHANDER —Photo by Hussa

A JOURNAL OF SOCIAL WELFARE



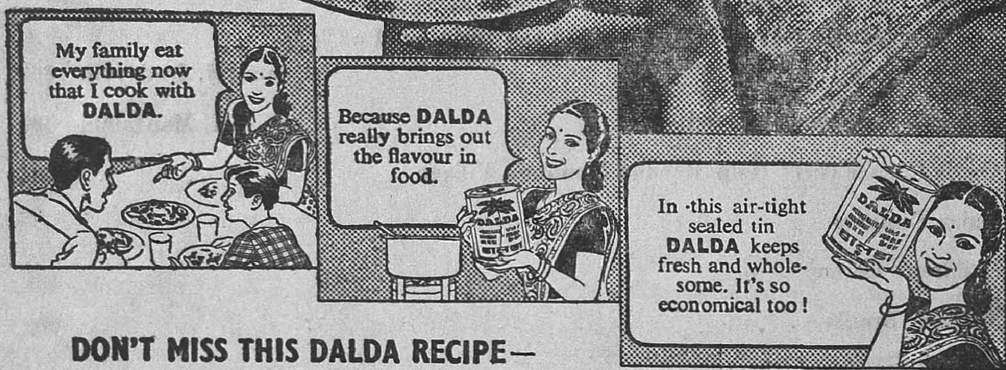
CAPE COMORIN—Bathing Ghat and the Sixteen Pillared Stone Mandapam
(After a painting by Sri K. Madhava Menon)

IN THIS ISSUE

HERE'S WHY DALDA VANASPATI IS BEST FOR ALL YOUR COOKING

My family never miss a meal
now that I cook with DALDA





DON'T MISS THIS DALDA RECIPE— FOR CHEMBU ILAI VADE—THE IDEAL DISH!

Make thick batter with half cup gramflour, pinch of baking powder, turmeric, salt to taste. Spread batter and sprinkle coconut on a chembu ilai (Arvi leaf). Fold in sides of leaf and roll (like a bed-roll). Fix the end with cloves. Steam for half an hour. Before serving cut into slices and shallow fry in Dalda.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT — The new illustrated DALDA COOK BOOK is now available in TAMIL, BENGALI, HINDI and ENGLISH. — 300 Recipes, hints on health, kitchen etc. Only Re. 1/-plus As.10 postage. Write today for your copy to:
THE DALDA ADVISORY SERVICE, P.O. BOX NO. 353, BOMBAY, 1.





DALDA

THE IDEAL ALL-PURPOSE COOKING MEDIUM

AVAILABLE IN 10lb., 5lb., 2lb., & 1lb. PACKS

HVM. 201-X52

Women's Welfare Journal

PUBLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S WELFARE, MADRAS

Vol. IX SEPTEMBER 1953 No. 9



From The Editor's Pen.

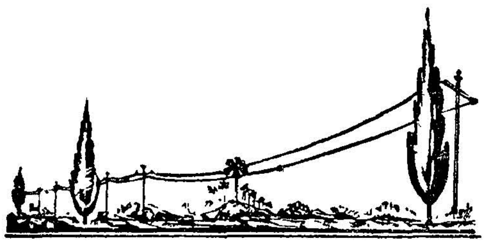
Women And The Five-Year Plan

SMT. DURGABAI DESHMUKH, one of the nation's most indefatigable workers for social welfare, who is now a member of the Planning Commission, made a significant exhortation in her convocation address to the graduates of the Thackersey Women's University in Bombay on August 22. She appealed to them to study the Five-Year Plan of the Government which is now in operation and which aims at raising the standard of living of the masses. Smt. Deshmukh said, " Your education will be judged by the manner in which it issues in action. For knowledge that remains untranslated into action is so much inert matter, clogging the intellectual and moral being ". Educated women, Smt Deshmukh pointed out, have an important role to play in the field of social reform Social evils like untouchability, traffic in women, child marriage and purdah which are still prevalent in the country have to be fought.

THE Five-Year Plan, on which all hopes of the nation rest, is not even known to a good proportion of the population, particularly women. It is the primary duty of educated women to diffuse knowledge about it and create enthusiasm for it among women. The Plan is based on the free and unfettered co-operation of all people in bettering conditions of living, and that presupposes the elimination of the many social evils that come in the way of co-operative effort. Many of the reforms necessary need the backing of families. Women are the centres of family life and it is their outlook that must first undergo a change. The family is as much a stronghold of prejudice as the most important factor in progress; to change the nation's outlook in free India one must begin with the family, and women, thus hold the key to all progress.

NOT only a change in the social atmosphere, but also regulation of the earning and spending habits of the nation is essential for the success of the Five-Year Plan, and here again, the future rests with women to a great extent. The planning of families, the small savings campaign, the inculcation of new food habits and the habit of encouraging Indian goods—are all responsibilities of women. In fulfilling these tasks, not only would they be contributing to progressin the present, but also ensuring the future as well by teaching a new way of life to their children, the future citizens of India

THE underlying principle of the Five-Year Plan is that life in India must be bettered largely through the voluntary effort of the people themselves with minimum aid from outside. This involves the right use of one's time, part of which must be given to work under such organizations as the Bharat Sevak Samaj. Educated women are thus called upon to provide the voluntary leadership on all fronts, enlightening the large number of women in India who have not received the blessing of Education. Looked at from the point of view of the task to be accomplished under the Five-Year Plan, Smt. Deshmukh's remark becomes much clearer— that " knowledge untranslated into action is so much inert matter ", particularly in the case of women. Educated women who withdraw into the seclusion of their homes are a loss to the country for their knowledge needs to be put to use both within the small circle of the home and the wider arena of public life, if they ars enlightened people ae to fulfil their function in the present situation in India.



If God is our defence who is against us.

Cape Comorin—Land's End of India

K. P. PADMANABHAN TAMPY, B.A.

ONE of the most ancient places of pilgrimage in India, Cape Camorin, Land's End of India, attracts thousands of Hindu pilgrims all through the year for bathing at the sacred ghats at the confluence of the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal, and worshipping at the shrine of Kanya Kumari which stands on the water's edge. Cape Camorin is approached from Trivandrum along a well laid out 55-mile concrete road, which winds through picturesque scenery that passes from the green of palm and paddy to the grey grandeur of the tall hills on the left and ultimately to the rich spectacle of the confluence of the three Seas. Here is the West Coast's most famous beauty spot. The Continent of India ends here in a "swan song of broken rocks and mingling oceans."

Epic Setting

The epic setting of Cape Comorin or Kanya Kumari is superb and serene. The confluence of the three mighty oceans, the perpetual roaring of the many waves of the three in perfect unison, the blazing sun above in the bright blue sky reflecting its brilliant rays on the ghats, the flight of steps leading down to the several sacred *teerthams*, the palace, the summer residences and season resorts, the rest house, the Cape Hotel with sea-fed bathing pool, a convent and a church nearby, the *Sathrams* and above everything else, the glittering golden dome of the temple of Kumari Kanya, the guardian goddess of India's southern end, the single Brahmin street straggling and congested which crouches near the walls of the shrine, the market place, and then, miles and miles of sands of various shapes and hues with sand-dunes and rock-hills on the shore, big and small, jutting into the seas—these distinctive features of the place keep one lost in the beauty of creation and ecstasy of enchanted vision. That is Cape Comorin, the Land's End of India.

Sunrise and Sunset

The shore is lonely and yet rapturous with the unending music of the waves over the rocks. Sunrise and sunset at Cape Comorin are the most fascinating sights. Where the great arm of the sea curves inland and the surging tide races across like a thousand white-crested sea-horses, there stretches a magnificent expanse of beach full of glittering sands and gleaming shells. The glory of the Cape in the morning hours is indescribable. The stately cocoanut and palmyra trees sway to and fro. From above comes a gleam of the sun's rays piercing through the thick leaves of the palms like a message from violent supernatural powers. Rugged and strangely folded stratified rocks stand on guard around the temple, greyish brown in shadow but shimmering in shades of red, yellow and brown when the morning sun warms them. And above hangs the deep blue sky into which the spires of the temple seem to cut sharply. Dense vegetation seems fresh and smart with tiny dew-drops dropping from the leaves. The crystal-clear waters of the three seas wash the foot of the temple.

The sea in the ample embrace of small creeks and huge rocks is always beautiful and attractive. Small villages and hamlets which nestle amidst dense coconut plantations enrich the scenery and make it gayer and more alive. When evening shadows cast their mystic spell of secrecy, and soft murmurings and whispers emanate out of the water, the picturesqueness of the Cape is best appreciated.

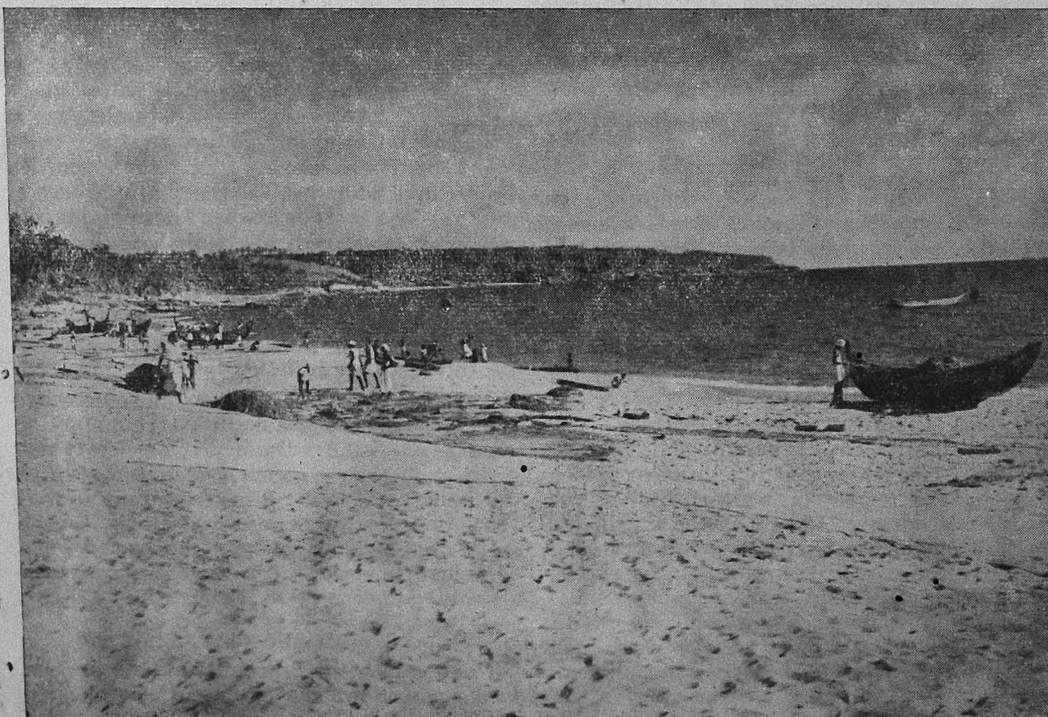
Moonlit Night

To gaze into the immensity of the horizon on a summer evening at Cape Comorin is to

Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead.

witness an indescribable picture of beauty, majesty and charm. What wonderful colours for the artist's brush this bewitching scene conjures up ? The glorious arch overhead of a deeper blue than the sky ever was, is lavishly embellished with patches of sheeny clouds tinged with the deepest and softest hues of infinite variety. The clouds themselves are of all shapes changing every moment both in form and colour through the varied effects of light and shade. The bright sun shows his broad and crimson disc through an aperture in the light clouds. The setting sun leaves behind a whirl of pink opal where the clouds jostle each other in the west. In the east the sky is topaz, lemon and turquoise while the sea assumes myriad impossible tints. The sands themselves sparkle in the fading red light of the setting sun and there is a glorious shimmer on the surface of the rolling sea. In the sea, a thousand evanescent rainbow colours flash reflecting the myriad tones of the brilliant evening sky.

Witness the charms of Cape Comorin at night when the heat is no longer reflected off the mounting sand, when the cool ozone-bearing night-breeze hisses across the feathery palm leaves into the interior, and the tides splash against the rocks throwing up silver spray. The scene then seems like the throne of the invisible sentinelled by a galaxy of stars. The silver moon hangs in the air shedding her soothing rays on the ripples, waves and sands. The deep blue vault of the clear sky studded with innumerable stars is mirrored perfectly on the waters of the ocean. White sands sparkling in the light of the moon stretch beneath the arc of the pellucid sky like a subtly-textured carpet woven by fairies at the



The Sea Beach at Cape Comorin

A good name is sooner lost than won.

command of some mighty wizard. The nights appear faintly illumined by the phosphorescent glow of the sea. The land enjoys an excess of loveliness and the sea which assumes an unearthly glow is very calm and beauty reigns supreme everywhere. What else is so joyful as a moonlit night spent on the immaculately clean sea front at Cape Comorin ?

Home of the Gods

Standing on the Land's End of India, eyes gazing towards the South Pole, the tourist turns east-wards to pay his homage to the Bay of Bengal, and the rising sun. In the evening he turns to the west to the Arabian Sea and witnesses the sunset. If Kailas, many thousands of miles away at the northern end of the vast continent of India is the sanctuary of the Devas and a barrier, Kanyakumari is also the home of Gods and an outpost against the demons of ancient Lanka.

Since ages past *Kanya Kumari* (Cape Comorin) has been an eagerly sought place of pilgrimage to the people of Hindusthan. Foreign travellers, such as Erotosthenes, Ptolemy and Pliny, seem to have visited this spot ages ago. *The Periplus of Arrian*, written in the first century A.D., has the following passage :—

> "Next to this is another place called Komar, where there is a Cape of the same name and a haven. Those who wish to consecrate the closing part of their lives to religion come hither, bathe and engage themselves in celibacy. This is also done by women, since it related that the Goddess once upon a time resided at the place and bathed."

There is a mention of the Cape Temple in the great Hindu epic, the Mahabharata. *Manimekalai*, a well-known Tamil work of the second century, narrates a tradition to the effect that Sali, the wife of a Brahman of Benares, walked all the way to Cape Comorin, bathed in the sea there, worshipped at the feet of the virgin Goddess *Kanya Kumari*, and was purged of her sin of unchastity. In *Durga Gayatri* occurs the following reference to this Goddess, *Karthyanaya, Vithmahe, Kanya Kumari, Dheemahi.* The story of the origin of the sacred spot is interesting.

Legend About Temple

Legend has it that in olden days there were two brothers named Banasura and Mukasura, who by dint of meditation and austerities won from Brahma the blessing of immortal life. These Asuras, who were cruel and callous, caused severe sufferings to the Devas. The Devas in utter consternation waited in deputation on Siva and requested him to save them from the wicked Asuras. While Siva was contemplating as to how the Asuras were to be put down, Parvati hinted to her Lord that Brahma had decreed that they would remain invulnerable so long as they were not confronted by a virgin girl, and that she had been ordained to appear on the earth for that purpose. Forthwith, the Goddess Parvati transformed herself into a *Kanyaka*, a virgin maiden. Open hostilities were set in full swing between the two Asuras and the goddess in human form. Finally, the Asuras were killed by the *Kanyaka* after a bloddy fight which lasted for eighteen days. This happy intelligence was duly communicated to Siva but Parvati could not be received by him as his spouse in her manifestation as a virgin. She was advised to hasten to Dakshinamukham Samudram, the present Cape Comorin, and to do penance there for expiating the sins of war. Parvati's victory over the Asuras is still celebrated in the form of the annual festival *Ambu Charita* (Bow fight), which falls in the second month of the Malabar year. This festival attracts thousands of pilgrims to Cape Comorin every year.

Cape Temple

Kanya Kumari is so named after the virgin goddess who presides over the temple on the shore. It is of great archæological importance. A lofty striped stone-wall surrounds the shrine. The temple is built in stone. The Cape Temple is after the Dravidian style of architecture which is conventional. The florid ' motif ' of the Hoysalayan is witnesses in the exquisite carvings in the Cape Temple.

The entrance is under a grand gateway through a passage richly ornamented The stone pillars and statues, the richly decorated heavy columns with protruding brackets, and the elaborately carved ceilings which are noticed in the temple, compel close examination. The

---

Let us try what esteem and kindness can effect.

granite pillars in the shrine produce different melodious sounds of varying tone when struck. There is a wealth of detail in the carvings which cannot but evoke wonder. With remarkable economy of line, human emotions are expressed in these exquisite carvings. The artists and artisans who created these marvels had an eye for feature and form and knew the technique to express them powerfully.

The stone wall encircling the shrine is imposing and looks like a huge fort wall. The division between the stones is hardly perceptible. This massive wall, plastered in white with broad vertical stripes of red, has stood the ravages of centuries of inclement weather. The seaward entrance to the temple is closed ; it has been so far a long time past. The eastern temple gate is opened only twice a year during certain festivals. Tradition has it that in days of yore the temple door facing the sea was ever kept open and all through the night the flash of the tiara of diamonds that adorned the head of the goddess acted as " the light house " of the Cape. Some foreign traders who knew this coveted the precious stones ; they anchored off the Cape, got ashore and marauded the temple. But the merry buccaneers were powerless to rob the goddess. In shame they retreated and incurred heavy losses. From that day the eastern gate remains closed.

The image of *Kanya Kumari* is of exquisitely chiselled granite. The image is bedecked with jewels and is lavishly decorated. The virgin goddess symbolises life " as chaste as ice, as pure as snow." "She symbolises like the eternal quest of the human soul and the essential unity of India, both physical and psychological."

The Cape Temple set up to the heroism of *Kanya Kumari*, a virgin of twelve, towers high as an outpost against the demons of ancient lanka and the ravages of the seas. The temple is always full of people some kneeling, some prostrate, some squatting, some lost in ecstasy, some wrapt in attention, some standing with closed eyes and joint palms, but all repeating the great precepts of their faith, chanting hymns and prayers, trying to bring into their hearts the wisdom of the scriptures.

It is a unique and soul-stirring spectacle to observe the highest Brahman and the lowliest Harijan, standing shoulder to shoulder at the Cape Temple and offering their full-volumed homage to the goddess in the form of hymns. This has been made possible, thanks to the wisdom and courage of His Highness Sree Bala Rama Varma Maharaja who by a bold and powerful stroke of the pen abolished every form of untouchability in the State and emancipated thousands of Harijans by permitting Hindus of all castes to worship in all the temples controlled by the State.

The temple shines in all its glory in the night at the hour of the *Sandhya Deepam* and *Pooja*. The *Deeparadhana* hour is regarded as the most sacred time for worship. It is then that the temple is in all its splendour. The image is lavishly decorated with jewels, sandalpaste, flowers and silk cloth. The temple is lighted brilliantly. Flutes play, drums beat, conches sound, bells ring, devotees chant prayers, and piety and devotion reign supreme. The flash of the rubies, emeralds and diamonds with which the goddess is adorned dazzles one's eyes and spreads a celestial radiance all round. Many voices, grave and gay, all ecstatic with piety and devotion, chant the sacred hymns ; the stone walls chant them back. The whole place is full of the sweet smell of the incense burning in the temple. The temple starts into a new glory, for it is all hung about with tiny, bright lamps and even the facades of the shrines are lit up.

Sjt. Mahadev Desai, in his " *Epic of Travancore* ", says : " I love rather to think of Uma, whose feet are washed by the Indian Ocean with his two hands, the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian sea, winning by her penance the Lord who has his abode in Kailas, northernmost point of India."

To the orthodox Hindu, Cape Comorin is a holy place radiant with divine grace. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi :

> " The place is eminently fit for contemplation. Like the Goddess, the waters around are virgin."

Sacred Teerthams

People believe that a plunge into the cool, sacred baths known as *Teerthams* washes away one's sins. The sacred *Teerthams* lie on the

three sides of the temple. The principal bathing ghat is at the edge of the sea. A small grey stone resting place has been constructed here, where the rocks jut out beyond the temple and the waves continually splash. This structure faces the rising sun and is of considerable antiquity. Some of the beautiful carved figures on the stone pillars of this *Mandapam* have been worn away due to ravages of the sea. The *Pathinarukal Mandapam* (16 stone-pillared *Mandapam*) is close by. Seated in this *Mandapam*, Brahmans perform their religious rites preceding a dip into the *Teerthams*. A flight of granite steps leads to the bathing ghat itself, a shallow rock pool shut in from the full force of the seas by a great mass of rock.

The *Mathru Theertham* is the most sacred of all the bathing ghats, and the majority of devotees bathe in this holy of holies, a calm pool, with water but waist deep, closed in by rocks all round. At the *teertham* proper the blue waters of the sea dash in with all fury and force. To afford protection to the bathers from drowning, steps have been built and a cordon of strong chains provided for the unway pilgrims to catch hold of and keep them back from being dragged into the ocean. Orthodox pilgrims plunge into the *teerthams* in couples, father and son, mother and daughter, husband and wife.

On the *Adi Amavasi* day many thousands of pious pilgrims from all over India gather at Cape Comorin to bathe in the sacred *teerthams* and offer religious rites in honour of their ancestral dead. The *Dasara* in the month of October is another season which attracts numberless devotees to this shrine.

Vivekananda and Kitchener Rocks

Swami Vivekananda during his wandering in quest of Truth arrived at Cape Comorin and was thrilled at the sight of the magnificent epic setting of the place. He reached the Cape fatigued, with no money to pay the ferry but he would not be held back at the Land's End of India. He plunged headlong into the going waters and swam across the *teerthams*, to one of the outlying rocks and there, wrapt in contemplation, paid his homage to the goddess. The rock upon which he squatted has since then borne his name.

Lord Kitchener, when Commander-in-Chief in India, paid a visit to the Cape and was greatly struck by its singular strategic importance. The great soldier could not resist the temptation of throwing himself into the waters for a swim on seeing the thrilling sight of the three seas in confluence. With great difficulty and after a narrow escape he reached one of the outlying rocks. This rock since then has been called after his name. The rugged and massive rocks buttressing into the sea at the Cape are imposing in their majesty and magnitude.

A Legend

There is a legend which celebrates the virginal purity of the Goddess Kanya Kumari. God Siva who has his abode at Suchindram, a few miles away from Cape Comorin, once took a fancy for Kanya Kumari and wanted to have her as his spouse. The goddess agreed at first. The hour and date of the marriage were fixed and all on earth and heaven gathered at the Cape. The wedding did not actually take place, for at the last moment the goddess changed her mind! Siva tried his utmost to win her back but failed. The rice and other cereals gathered for the wedding were scattered over the entire shore by the infuriated God and his retinue. The sands of Cape Comorin are wonderfully diverse in shape and colour, some actually resembling cereals. Scientific knowledge tells us that this strange phenomenon is due to the presence of various mineral sands, such as Garnet and Monozite. Superstitious folk believe that some of the beads and shells obtained in plenty at Cape Comorin act as charms which possess the power of scaring away evil spirits and bringing good luck. Parents tie around the waists of their children some of these beautiful beads and shells washed ashore by the Cape seas. The white pebbles with blue lines and black dots are in great demand, for, women who desire easy child-birth use them as talismans. Interesting specimens of beautiful shells and sands obtained here are sure to delight the collector of curios and the enterprising geologist :

Tourist Paradise

Kanyakumari is an incomparably charming paradise for camping, picnic, hiking, sea-bathing, angling, yachting, canoeing and

---

Memory calls our absent ones to mind.

recouping health and vigour. Life at the cape is essentially comfortable, homely, pleasant, active and recreative. Cape Comorin is an ideal place in which to spend a holiday and the very large number of visitors, rapidly increasing from year to year from both home and abroad, bears ample testimony to this fact.

When the gales have died down, when the wind drives the last wisps of cloud across the deep blue sky, while the endless line of snow-white surf is still boiling along the entire coast in the greyness of the steeper parts and on the broad stretches of multi-coloured sands, when the sea-birds gleam across the greenish blue steel grey of the sea and the sparkling sands on the coast, when the bells chime and musical instruments play in the temple, when the dialect of the devotees mingles harmoniously with the music of the waves and the delicate tints of the landscape—then begins the lovely season at Cape Comorin—Land's End of India.

Verily, Cape Comorin is the El-Dorado of pilgrims, landscape painters, photographers, Canoeists, hikers and sight-seers.



Cape Comorin.

God comes at last, when we think He is farthest off.

The Education of Sita

DR. S. N. VYAS, M.A., PH.D.

ON her own verdict, Sita was 18 when Rama was 25, so she was seven years younger than her husband. Rama married when he was between 16 and 17 years of age. After marriage, she lived with Rama for 12 happy years at Ayodhya, and was exiled with him in the 13th year, i.e , when she was about 23. During the 13th year of exile, Sita, when she was about 35, was carried away by Ravana, the king of Lanka, and she remained a captive for about a year in his island capital. After rescue, she returned with Rama to Ayodhya as his queen at 36, but within a year was banished from court, her character in captivity being questioned by many. She now lived in forced retirement for about 16 years in the hermitage of Valmiki, there giving birth to her twin sons, Kusa and Lava. At about 53, when her youthful sons were rising to fame as pupils of the great Valmiki, she was recalled to court with a view to being formally restored as Queen ; but worn out as she was by many tragedies of life, she could not survive the shock of a public oath of fidelity demanded of her.

The above brief sketch of Sita's chequered life shows that the greater part of her education was post-marital, influenced partly by her husband and partly by the special environments of her long periods of exile from the court. All the same, her early years of maidenhood at her parental home were not barren, and she must have received some sort of elementary education. She must have been taught to read and write then ; she was certainly literate, for later we find her at Lanka reading and recognizing the engraved autograph of her husband on his ring sent through Hanuman. The script she learnt was perhaps pictographic, though it is quite possible that



Sita reads the name of her husband engraved on his ring sent through Hanuman.

by the 15th century B. C. (when she lived) the pre-Aryan pictographs of the 3rd millenium B.C. had developed into an alphabet.

To do no evil is good, to intend none is better.

From the fact of Hanuman deliberating over the language in which he should accost Sita at the Asoka grove in Lanka, it appears that she knew three kindred languages—the *Manusi*, the *Dvijati* and the *Vanara*. Of these, the colloquial *Manusi* was perhaps the language of her early instruction, while her acquaintance with the refined diction of the *Dvijatis* and with the *Vanara* dialect must have been the outcome of her 13 years' stay in the Deccan *asramas*. In one of these first two literary dialects, Sita seems to have read a Metrical Book of Animal Fables and committed a good deal of it to memory in her girlhood; for, later on, in the course of conversation with Hanuman, she refers to "puranic *slokas* sung by Riksa" and quotes from memory.

While she was yet unmarried, *i.e.*, before ten, a *sama-vritta bhiksini* (a nun of restrained senses) is said to have come to her father's court and told her mother about her future life in forest retreats. As pointed out by Dr. S. C. Sarkar what this nun told Sita's mother about was clearly the outstanding traits of Sita's character as they appeared to her, which in her view marked the girl out for a cloistered career in a forest retreat or a life in the midst of nature. There is no need of seeing here a mere prophecy of future exile into the wilderness; it is rather an instance of an itinerant nun's intelligent forecast of the lines of a girl's development. The truth of *bhiksini's* estimate is corroborated by the many consistent illustrations throughout the epic of Sita's love of nature and *asrama* surroundings, and also by the learning and refinement she could acquire in the *asramas* during her exile.

Then Sita, on her own testimony before Anasuya, received before marriage a lot of instructions about wifely duties from her mother and other relatives, which was supplemented by lessons from *sruti* or traditional lore about the eternal character of marriage alliances from famous Brahmanas. It is not stated whether these famous men were her private tutors. The instruction in wifely duties was continued also under her mother-in-law. Besides, Sita must have obtained at her father's house a grounding of Vedic *mantras* and political duties (*rajadharma*).

Like her mother-in-law, Sita at Ayodhya remained in active touch with educational institutions—a fact which alone can explain the intimate relationship of a *sakhi* between Sita and the preceptor Suyajna's wife. She made presents of her personal jewellery and bed-room furniture to her *sakhi* before leaving with her husband to the forest.

During the major portion of her exile, Sita was free to develop along the lines of her natural inclinations. No longer restricted by the circumstances of city and court life, she revelled in the countryside like a child of nature; no more oppressed by grave saws about wifely duties, and getting her husband all to herself, she plunged into a perpetual honeymoon, translating her very house-keeping into a romance. Her craving for the delightful and serene surroundings of the *asramas* and the ennobling genial company of the inmates thereof—renowned sages and bright students, venerable matrons and sweet girls—was satisfied but not satiated by her twelve or thirteen years residence at various *asrama*-settlements. Hers must have been an enviable unfolding of womanhood, sweetened by nature, brightened by culture and sustained by love.

Thus after twelve years of *asrama* residence, she could pride herself on being a *pandita*, though according to Ravana she might be a *panditamanini* lady and a *mudha* besides, to reject his offer of Empress rank There were several occasions during her captivity (following immediately after her residence in the asramas), which showed incidentally that she had in the course of the previous twelve or thirteen years become fairly learned woman. Her allusion to obstetric surgery in the course of conversation with Hanuman can only refer to some sort of adult training in or acquaintance with scientific dissection of a fœtus in abnormal maternity cases, conducted by some *asrama* physician and surgeon Sita must have "looked" an intellectual woman to Hanuman in whose mind at once welled up at her sight strongly academic similes: Thus he deems the captive Sita like remembered tradition of doubtful meaning or authenticity like sullied understanding, like learning slackened or rusted from want of practice and application, like words having a different sense

May many a gleam of sunshine cross your path.

owing to the absence of grammatical arrangement or refinement, and like the diminished learning of one who reads on the first lunar day. Such descriptions would be very peculiar and meaningless if they did not allude to Sita's high education

So too does Sita herself now use a language befitting a *pandita*: She considers herself to be the fit consort of Rama alone, just as *vidya* or highest knowledge belongs to the person who is *vrata-snata* and *viditatma* (i.e., who had returned to home-life after taking the ceremonial bath marking the conclusion of his courses of study and who has learnt the doctrine of *atman*). Sita is positively sure that she cannot give her love to Ravana as an initiated person cannot think of conferring knowledge of Vedic texts on an uninitiated person. That Hanuman thought it pertinent to give her a detailed account of her husband's education and special attainments shows that she must have come to know the nature of school studies sufficiently well to understand and estimate the elements of an average high education. Her appreciation of Hanuman's certain specified physical, intellectual and moral excellences to be found in a harmonious (*sobhana*) blend, and of his ideal speech indicative of the complete eightfold development of the process of understanding, shows that she was thoroughly conversant with the professional knowledge of the teachers of her time

After her rescue from captivity and restoration to her husband, Sita for a time reverted to her bridal life as it were, at the age of 35, content to be a beloved wife and a bounteous queen-consort, with no other interests except the joys of youth, love and wealth. But her happiness was short-lived. While she was expecting to be a mother, and the high tide of restoration festivities had subsided, the second great permanent interest of her life revived, and her fancies soared once again across the Ganges to the great luring *asramas* on it and beyond. She now expressed her desire to visit these familiar *asramas* and spend a night in each of them. She took with her various costly jewels and robes for presenting them to the wives of the *munis* in the *asramas* Escorted by Laksmana she travelled southwards, spending a night at an *asrama* on the Gomati on her way, and crossing the Ganges below Prayaga on a well-fitted barge, and landed on the site of Valmiki's *asrama* settlement.

Here she learnt that she was not thence to return to court again, and she was advised by Laksmana to spend her exile in residence with Valmiki, who was a famous *muni* and a great friend of her late father-in-law. Sita accepted her misfortune calmly. Her dignity, restraint and fortitude on the occasion are truly becoming of an educated lady in the truest sense.

Thus after a brief gap of two or three changeful stormy years, Sita was thrown back upon the serene *asrama*-life, but this time without the leaven of the joys of love. No details are given as to how Sita was employed during this second *asrama*-residence for about 16 years. The care and upbringing of her

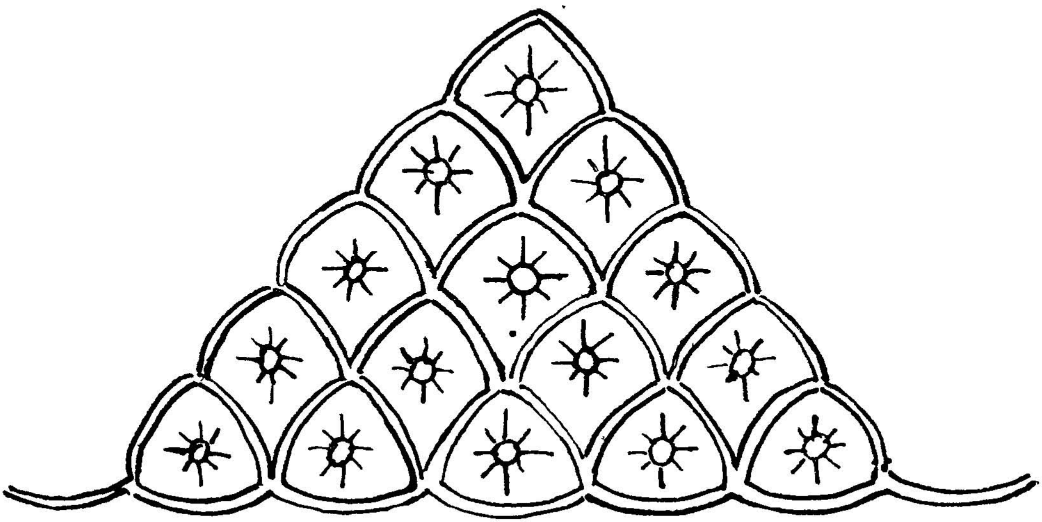


Sita assisting Valmiki at his epic.

children, vows and penances and pining for her lost love and honour must have taken up most of her time. It seems quite probable that it was Sita's tragic life that suggested to Valmiki the theme of his epic, and it was she

who must have supplied him with all the personal details of Rama's life and conduct. It may be presumed therefore that Sita was engaged during these years in a great labour of love in assisting Valmiki at his epic.

By the end of these long years of *asrama*-residence, Sita had certainly won the universal esteem of all *asrama*-people—*risis, munis* and students. Her popularity and influence with them is shown in the events of the fateful Horse-Sacrifice held by Rama, which she attended in the company of Valmiki and his *asrama*-teachers and pupils. The *parisad* or assembly in which Sita took her oath of fidelity was attended by numerous *risis*; Valmiki himself addressed Rama and his assembly with considerable warmth, pointing out the injustice done to Sita. The proposal of her restoration as Queen and the procedure of the oath were approved by all the sages; and as she actually took the oath she was warmly applauded by all the *munis*. Before she passed away she learnt she had been appreciated by the only two she cared for, her husband and the *asrama*-world.



An embroidery design.

Many a one labour for the days he will never see.

Notes on Adult Literacy

(Used in five discussion classes for the trainees of the Women's Welfare Department.)

[Srimathi M. Lakshmi Ammal, Organising Secretary of the Madras Seva Sadan gave a series of five lectures on Audult Education to the Organiser Trainees of the Department of Women's Welfare. We give below brief notes of these lectures in the hope that they will help a wider circle of literary workers—*Ed.*]

I. Introduction

(*a*) *Literacy methods.*—Best explained in the languages in which literacy is to be imparted. Literacy methods related to the script, and the words of Tamil, best explained in Tamil, rather than in English.

But the use of English, as a language commonly understood by Tamil, Telugu and Malayalee students, though a handicap, is not to be considered a severe handicap. For, the general principles underlying the methods could be modified and used to suit different groups of learners and different languages.

Certain basic problems are common wherever illiteracy is found in the Modern World. Some of the best guidance for teachers is found in the Fundamental Education Bulletins published by UNESCO Avenue Kleber, Paris.

Other reference Books : Hand Bookof Social Education for teachers—Ministry of Education —New Delhi, Hand Books and Pamphlets published by the South Indian Adult Education Society and the Department of Education, Madras Adult Education, U.S.I.S. Pamphlet, etc.

(*b*) *Certain Basic Assumptions.*—Illiteracy of the adult (above 14 years or the school going age) is a privation in the Modern World. A privation is by definition the absence of something that is expected to be present; thus, blindness is called a privative term logically, and means the loss of vision of one who, normally, should be able to see. This privative significance attached to illiteracy is a gorwth of Modern Times.

There were, in the past, large groups of people in all classes of society, who were illiterate; they had other skills, but not that of reading and writing and the potter, who hired a scribe to write a letter for him was no more ashamed of his lack of skill, than the scribe was, of his lack of skill in moulding clay. But with the advance of civilization and the storing up of knowledge in script, literacy became part of elementary education. In the modern world, illiteracy is associated with other privations such as poverty and a more primitive mode of life and thought, than that which obtains among the literates of one's own generation. Hence the need to remove illiteracy, as one of the basic privations. The UNESCO stresses the connection (not casual—but coincident) between poverty and illiteracy and their fight against illiteracy is closely linked up with efforts to raise the standards of living.

(*c*) *The history* (*a brief, sketchy view*) *of the literacy movement in South India.*—Its beginnings in patriotic motives—not to appear contemptible in the eyes of the advanced Western Countries—its falling back on a second line of defence, i.e., illiteracy here did not mean absence of culture—here alone as in the past, many people were illiterate but cultured; the whole problem set aside during the political struggle and tackled from a fresh point of view i.e., "a democracy should be literate". "He who is given the vote should be able to read", etc. The last reason not convincing—but a good cause may be bolstered up by reasons, strong or weak. The adult literacy problem exists, in a small or great measure in many parts of the world. It was the extent of the problem and the possibility of standardizing methods and publications, that interested the U.N. Experts.

II. Adult Education and Adult Literacy

The former made easy when there is a literate populace. Further education and adult education in countries advanced in literacy, have

reference to technical or cultural courses, suited to people who have already had a complete school education. Adult education in countries backward in literacy has a different scope and connotation; its purpose is propaganda in hygiene and citizenship, so that the illiterate 'Masses' might not live in a different world influenced by superstitions and ways of thought, different from that of a cultured folk. The cultured people also have their own superstitions and are limited by selfishness or snobbery. Where there are many barriers of class and upbringing, the purpose of adult education is to disseminate certain ideas among as wide a group as possible; literacy is merely a tool in this scheme, but besides that, literacy has a value of its own, as adding to a man's personal equipment.

Once there was a contest between adult education and adult literacy over priority—Now the State has included literacy in its scheme of Social Education—The Cinema, the Theatre, the Library movement, Broadcasting by Radio, Journals and pamphlets, speeches and exhibitions, bhajans and elections are all aids to the education of the people, this 'education' being a by-product of their main purpose of entertainment or propaganda; but the term 'Social Education' is used with a limited connotation and refers to organized teaching offered to a group of adults, with a definite syllabus or scheme of subjects of instruction, to be finished in a definite period of time.

Social education schemes cover as many as 25 subjects some times; and include agriculture, bee-keeping, mother craft, etc. These courses can be fitted into a general pattern. (The State being secular, leaves out Religion which can be the most powerful incentive). This pattern of education of the 'People' may be shown as five pointed star.

(i) Citizenship: Elementary civics, understanding of the relationship between local Government and the Government of the Republic of India, duties and rights, the ideals of the constitution, tolerance for other religions and communities, the country's problems and world affairs, and last, some knowledge of the U.N.O.

(ii) Science (with stress on its applied aspects of health and sanitation).

(iii) Literacy (as a tool to citizenship, enough to read news papers at least).

(iv) A Craft (with stress on agriculture or handicrafts).

(v) Recreation (with stress on communal enjoyment and participation).

The scheme has striking features—Take the scheme for citizenship for instance—it is obviously subject centred, in its inclusion of 'talk of many things' one of them, the U.N.O. Social Education, if it is to be real education, cannot be the pouring in of information into the passive receptive mind of the grown up pupil, a working class father or mother of a family.

The more perfect the scheme, the less its practical appeal.

This handicap has to be overcome and converted into an advantage by the technique of new methods employed. Here we are concerned mainly with the methods for one of these subjects—literacy.

III. Literacy

Problems of Adult Literacy teaching.—Well known and oft repeated—the adult pupils are indifferent; *if* they wanted to, they can learn quicker than small children.

Reference—Thorndike—Adult Education—Statistical Tables proving that learning is quicker between 14 to 40 than between 6-14 of most subjects, including languages; one's own experience that a literate in one language can usually become literate in another in a few months; and an adult can pick up literacy in his mother tongue in six months which is three or four times quicker than what a child can accomplish—but the illiterate adult has two handicaps to overcome.

(*a*) An inferiority complex.

(*b*) Real distractions of every day living and earning a livelihood.

Both these should be faced and overcome.

The Problem of the Teachers.—To find a group of 20 to 40 people in a locality, who are

likely, to attend the class or centre continuously at the same time of the day, for a period ranging from 6 weeks to 2 years.

It is waste of effort to teach smaller groups than at least 20 or to teach them in different batches at different times of the day. Literacy cannot be spread by individuals teaching individuals but only by public co-operation with classes for adults.

There should also be minimum unit of achievement; these units are now fixed in curricula and approximate roughly to three stages—

(1) From illiteracy to enough language skill, as is found in class 3.

(2) From that to class 5 standard in language and arithmetic.

(3) General knowledge and help towards maintaining skills with the help of the library movement.

Getting the pupils is part of step one; using many teaching aids, including audio visual aids is part of all three steps.

Our main concern—the first two stages.

The teacher must, in the beginning, concentrate on quick literacy achievement;

Three steps to teaching: (for the teacher)—

Preparation (of material), the lesson and revision.

Three steps in learning: (for the pupils)—

Preparation (mental alertness), study and exercise, and the satisfaction of having learnt being an urge to further learning.

After the first day or two, no time should be spent on general preparation (propaganda for literacy) but the preparation should be a part of the lesson plan.

The lesson plan.—The teacher should teach the group, then test and teach the individuals—The pleasure of quick learning should be a surprise and satisfaction to the pupils. The teacher should come with prepared materials and a lesson plan for each day.

The Laubach Chart (demonstrated).—Chief ~~value is in creating the feeling~~ of quick achievement.

[A brief sketch of Dr. Laubach's work in other parts of the world, his visit to South India, nearly thirty years ago and again recently, his faith in the value of literacy for all, and his missionary fervour inspiring others with zeal.]

IV. The Chief Features of the Laubach Chart in Tamil

1. The alphabet is rearranged in such a series as to get the greatest amount of repetition of signs that stand for the combination of short and long vowels with the consonants.

2. An attempt is made to combine with this the principle of letters easy to write being taught earlier, than letters that have a more difficult linear form in script.

3. An attempt is made to use pictures to recall at the same time both the sound and script of the letter. The first is the most important and valuable; the introduction of the second and third principles, meant to simplify learning, sometimes tend towards a simplicity that is really artificial and difficult. (A criticism of the Laubach Chart.)

This should not be an excuse for belittling the achievement of the Laubach Method—a demonstration of quick teaching.

But knowledge of the script, however phonetic the language, is not literacy. Literacy is ability to read and write, and feel that one has a command, that could be quickened any time, over a language, that is one's own.

Other quick Literacy Methods.—Discussions on whether it is an advantage to stress writing more than reading.

There should be at least equal emphasis on both.

Follow up Primers and Readers in Tamil. Features common to them. Most text-book writers seem to presume that once the initial difficulty of learning to read words is overcome, the adult class is ready for knowledge of many subjects to be imparted, through books and pamphlets.

An opposite view is taken by U.N. Experts, who seem to feel that, the adult class has to have "Reading made easy" through many

stages; that follow up readers should not present many new ideas or be text-books primarily for other subjects—the purpose of the readers is to make reading a pleasant leisure time occupation for the people, in the first instance.

Their ideal —more sugar coating for the pills, than with follow up books here.

Problem of standardization—What is local and particular of more interest than what is general and universal. But cheap production of books is possible only if there is a wide public. Economic production requires that literature for the adult class be standardized, deal with general topics, have a lesson for one language translated into another, the same blocks for illustrations used, etc.

But maximum interest for the reader would require local news-sheets, books and magazines with an appeal to a particular group.

Much can be done with a duplicating machine, the teacher and pupils jointly providing reading materials for the village.

Reading charts in M.S. Form possible only at the early stage.

V. Summing Up

It is desirable that our people should be literate.

The widespread of schools for children is the best safeguard against illiteracy thirty years later, but here and now illiteracy among adult has to be fought, for the sake of the people as well as the children.

Repeated experiments have proved that the alphabet of the South Indian languages can be taught along with the reading of the simple words and phrases within a period of 6 to 12 weeks; 1 hour a day 5 days in the week and doing revision during the week-end. In the beginning, concentrate on the script saving a little time for songs and word games. Do not try too close a correlation between ' education ' and literacy in the beginning.

Not all that is worth knowing is worth reading.

The reading material should not be too condensed.

Allow the genius of the spoken language to shape the reading material, and let repetition, pithy saying, alliteration natural to a language, find place in the reading material.

Let the ideas have the interest of familiarity. Reading is done with the mind and not only with the eye.

Let the writing be an expression of new knowledge imparted orally and expressed orally by the pupil first.

The question of correlation.—With the subjects in the Social Education Syllabus.

Let the teacher have a clear objective—of what she intends to correlate reading and writing with. Let her note the principle stated in psychology manuals that what is near is interesting, what is remote is interesting—but that the middle distance is usually barren tract.

Some rules for the teacher in handling the syllabus—

Do not be exhaustive or enumerative.

Do not fail to begin and link up with what is familiar.

Do not fail to use ' aids '.

Do not fail to prepare.

A teacher may improvise after careful preparation, but not without careful preparation or as a substitute for it.

[No one has yet published a detailed account of plans and notes of lessons, with remarks on actual results, of a six months' programme of teaching an adult class, in the second stage, after bare literacy, such records, if kept in Women's Welfare Centres, would be very interesting.]

Education is the apprenticeship of life.

The Principal Factors and Supporters in the Training of a Child

Swami M. Irudayam

Listen, O child, thou needs must early learn
In this world good from evil to discern;
Or else the useful herb thou wilt pass by
And pluck the poisonous flower that charms the eye.

THE earliest training has this in view: to teach the child to distinguish between good and evil, between what is useful and what is poisonous and to take delight only in the former. To accomplish this profitably various means are necessary. In a nursery ground the young, growing plants are fastened at an early period to stakes or supports to make them grow upright and straight; so in the training of children certain strong supports are required.

What is primarily and essentially necessary in education for the child's support is the good example of the parents. Vain will be their words, useless their lamentations, fruitless their exhortations, if instead of edifying their children by their good example, they rather give them scandal. Children soon imitate what they see their parents do. Only too often do we experience the truth of the saying which tells us that as is the father, so is the son, as is the mother, so is the daughter. Let us take the case of parents who never pray, never think of their religion. Children may be taught at school that they ought to be religious, ought to pray morning and evening but if they see that their parents neglect to pray, they will follow this bad example.

The following incident forcibly shows how great is the effect of bad example. A lady overheard a little boy about five or six years old using very bad language whilst playing in the street with other children. She stopped and reproved him severely, threatening to complain of him to his parents. "I don't care if you do," was the unexpected rejoinder. "Father and mother curse worse than I do!" It is most deplorable that such parents should exist.

On the contrary we often find to our consolation that poor but good fathers and mothers in cities and in the country have given their children an excellent training. The secret lies in the power of good example. The children of parents who themselves practise all that religion requires of them, are certain to turn out well. "Exampla trahunt verba autem volant." Words pass but examples drag us.

The second essential in home training consists in accustoming the children to obedience from the outset. A little boy was asked, "Tell me, my child, do you obey your mother or does she obey you?" "I obey her when she is angry," he replied partly, "but when she is not angry she obeys me!" It was very plain that he had never been taught to obey.

There are fathers and mothers who in their foolish fondness themselves obey a child. The little amateur has only to scream, and they hasten to do whatever the young gentleman wishes! If a child is not taught to obey from infancy, the lesson of obedience will prove very hard to implant later on and never perhaps be thoroughly grounded.

Just as it is often necessary when tying up young trees to use a certain amount of force to straighten what is crooked, so strictness is required in accustoming children to obedience; they must be reproved, and punished also. For the words of Holy Scripture cannot but be true: "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son." It is clear that this saying holds good in the present day; it can never be antiquated, even in the twentieth century progress and vaunted humanity. It is absolutely necessary to be strict with children at certain

times and without losing one's temper. Children remember, praise and thank their parents, only if these were strict in forming them.

Another main factor in the education of a child is the school. The training at school has a two-fold purpose—one temporal, the other eternal. At school the child ought to be trained to be a good and useful member of society, to do the will of God and thus to secure the reward of heaven. Therefore, the school should not only instruct but educate as well, educate in obedience in truthfulness and before all else in the fear of God, in self-control and in purity of heart. But nowadays there are schools and schools. Therefore it is the duty of parents being anxious to give their children a real and moral education, to select such schools and institutions as are best suited to their purpose.

In conclusion, let me relate an anecdote for the good of the children.

A young lady received (as is the modern fashion) a letter in which improper proposals were made to her, these being couched in the most alluring and flattering terms. With childlike confidence she showed the letter to her mother, who, after reading it, turned pale and burst into tears. When the daughter saw this, she exclaimed: "O my darling mother, you need not be in the least anxious about me! Your tears have entirely obliterated all the specious flatteries and fair promises which this letter contains."

The mother tenderly embraced her daughter and gave her a diamond ring, the stones of which sparkled as brightly as do dewdrops when the sun shines upon them. Filled with gratitude, the good child said: "Dearest mother, I solemnly promise that if ever improper proposals should again be made to me I will look at these precious stones and say to myself: 'These are your mother's tears.'"

Let parents give some such token of good training. Then their children will not pluck the poisonous flowers that charm their eyes.



For a pillow case corner

Heaven gives the grace needed for the moment.

It Still Remains Unsolved

K. MANGALAM, B.SC., M.ED.

RAMU and Saras were cousins. They had many things in common. They liked to hum film music, preferably together and chat about others. Time passed like lightning between them. Saras was a day student of a nearby school and Ramu was a resident student of a College. Week ends and evenings were spent at Saras' house.

It was examination time. Saras was busy learning by heart the causes that led to the Third Burmese War. She was so much absorbed in her studies that she failed to notice the rhythmic footsteps of Ramu, which she would under other circumstances make out at a mile's distance.

Ramu too was unusual that day. He did not enter the room, whistling a popular film tune, and with soldier-like walk to snatch the book from Saras, as he would do normally. He stood at the door gazing at her with a smile. Saras lifted her head and was astonished to see Ramu standing there with a stupid smile She wondered what could have happened to him. Ramu entered the room and sat on the window sill at a distance away from her and in front



Is not the sky beautiful ?

of her. Ramu said almost abruptly "is not the sky very beautiful ?" She wondered what could be wrong with him. For her, the sky was as usual as on any other day. But for courtesy's sake she answered "Yes, if you choose to call it beautiful." Ramu said nothing further. He sat there like a dumb doll, gazing at the sky and Saras alternately. Saras went on with her studies. Ramu got up and said with a sigh, "How I wish that we could spend our lives for ever like this." So saying he walked off. Saras heard this but she had no patience to analyse what he had said. All that she felt was that there was something wrong with Ramu, and that he should be sent to a doctor.

The next day Saras sat down to study. She raised her head and looked through the window. Surprising indeed She too felt that the sky was beautiful. There was some truth in what Ramu had said. "Ramu is a better observer than me" she said to herself. But how could she account for her peculiar behaviour and his wish. She tried and tried but could not find an answer. For a change she switched on the Radio and there she had the answer." "If there is true love." . . . The problem was solved. Ramu was in love with her. Then was it not incumbent on her to love Ramu in return.

Things went on as usual, but Ramu and Saras almost stopped playing, singing and chatting together. They greeted each other with a broad smile or at the most "How do you do ?" They were no longer cousins but lovers. So much was Saras absorbed in her love for Ramu, that she almost ceased to bother about Ramu's attitude towards her. But something from the bottom of her heart told her that Ramu did not care enough for her. She suppressed that painful idea.

In the meanwhile, Ramu got an appointment in the Army. Saras thought he would come to take leave of her. He did not turn up and Saras was disappointed. She felt very, very sad. Years passed. Saras took up social service as her mission, and she rendered wholehearted and valuable service to the cause of the poor and handicapped. She was full of hope that Ramu would come back to marry her one day. Like a bolt from the blue came the news of Ramu's wedding. She also heard that Ramu was getting a well accomplished girl for his wife and that he was overflowing with joy. Ramu would have his happiness ; for her, she could have only sweet memories of the past. "Marriages are made in Heaven" she said to herself.

One day Saras was waiting for the bus on the Marina. The bus came and when she was about



They met at a bus stop years after

to get into the bus, she saw Ramu stepping out. She was puzzled and another passenger got into the bus. The bus was full and Saras had to get down.

There stood Ramu and Saras almost dumb, like two dolls. There was pin drop silence. Saras felt she was losing her balance. Looking at a yonder tree, she said in a sobbing voice, "Congratulations, Ramu," and started walking

towards home. Ramu followed her. Both of them felt heavy at their hearts and tears flowed down their cheeks. Ramu cleared his throat and said almost abruptly " Saras, please listen to me ; do understand me in the right light ; you know I joined the army. Unfortunately I got into a scrape. I was no longer the same Ramu ; one thing remained in me unchanged and that is my love for you. My conscience told me I was no longer fit to marry you. The more I thought about you the more I felt I should not marry you. I was afraid, so long as I remained unmarried, you may not agree to marry any other suitable man. I further hoped, as a revenge you would get married. But you have reacted in the opposite way. Well, by-gones are by-gones. Upon my honour I tell you, I love you, I have loved you and shall love you until eternity. If God wills, our love may bear fruit in our next lives." So saying he crossed the road and disappeared in one of the side lanes.

Saras reached home and sat near the same window. She thought if she was right in accusing Ramu ; could she believe what he had said ; if he loved her truly, would he have got into scrapes ; was he justified in marrying that girl ; how would that girl feel if she came to know of this affair ; had Ramu wanted, would she have married him ; would Ramu be really happy if she would get married ; would she be happy if she gets married . . .

Days, months and years have passed, since then and still Saras could not get an answer to any of the questions that arose in her mind on that day. Well, why should she at all be worried about those querries. Had she not



At social work

resolved to remain unmarried and dedicate herself to the welfare of the needy, long before she had met him on the Marina ? Does she not find peace of mind and contentment in her social work ? . . . So she thought.



Let us hope each cloudy day may have a sunny morrow.

Greek College Girls' Help Rebuild Mountain Village

MONEY raised by Greek college girls, and activities inspired by their efforts, have brought new hope to the inhabitants of Neochorakian, devastated village in the Greek mountains. The girls of Pierce College, an American school for Greek girls near Athens, asked the friends of Villages Organization how they could use the sum of about $2,000 (£700) they had collected at a Christmas Bazaar. They were told about Neochorakian, war-scarred village where the villagers returning in 1950 had to rebuild their homes stone by stone. Doors, windows, floors and furniture were still lacking, and poverty was universal.

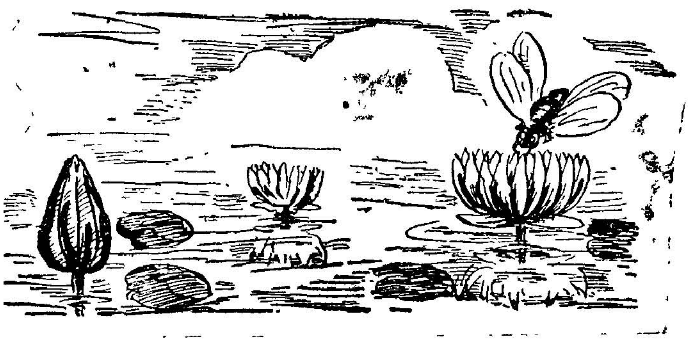
There were not only problems of housing to be tackled. The college girls set to work to provide food and clothing for the villagers, and also to enlist help for building sheds and toilets, damming the river, erecting a church and starting small industries as a means for the 42 families to earn a living.

Officials were approached and the girls' efforts inspired action *Care* promised food parcels, the World Council of Churches sent clothing and blankets, the Friends of Villages offered picks and shovels. Save the Children Fund sent school supplies. Other organizations sent sheets and household equipment and the army promised transportation to the village.

The Ministry of Public Works, with American aid, made plans for a flood wall to save the arable land. As for industries, the Ministry of Agriculture has sent fruit trees and is introducing bee swarms. An American mission is sponsoring a three-month "skill school" where boys will learn carpentry and masonry so that they can build bee-hives, out-houses and sheds, and doors and windows for the houses. Ten looms have been contributed to set up a small weaving industry.

Most of these contributions were gifts by the agencies concerned, and the girls' money has thus stretched far beyond their hopes. Their chief contribution has been gifts of lamps and chickens for every family in the village.

(*UNESCO*).



One good turn deserves another.



Louis Braille

YOU may be familiar with this name but, may be, all of you are not quite sure of the great good he did to this world, especially to the blind.

In the year 1812 in a little French village of Coupvray a little boy with sparkling eyes was



playing in his father's saddle-making shop. Suddenly he took hold of two sharp awls, (instruments for making holes) and ran away with them. He stumbled and lost the sight of one eye and soon became totally blinded.

He went about from tree to tree in his garden tapping with a cane. For every spot he wished to go, be it a tree or a pond or a garden seat, he would give a certain number of taps. After years of struggle, he developed a system of sightless reading and writing by taps and called it "Frozen taps".

When Louis was ten years old, he went to the school for the blind at Paris. Valentin Hauy, the founder of the school, taught Louis the alphabet by guiding his fingers along the 26 letters, made out of twigs. From these Louis passed on to books where letters were cut out of cloth and pasted on pages. Each letter was about 3 inches high and 2 inches wide. A simple story like *Reynard the fox* filled seven thick books, each weighing about eight pounds

When Louis was fourteen, a pupil in Hauy's School, he discovered that when letters are typed hard, by feeling the ridges at the back, they can be felt and read. Still the letters have to be large and a book, a tremendous affair. Louis was getting very impatient in his ignorance. He once told his father, "The blind are the loneliest people in the world. Here, I can distinguish one bird from another by its call ; I can know the entrance to the house by the creeper. But am I never to know what lies beyond the confines of hearing and feeling? Only books can free the blind. But there are no books for the blind that are worth anything".

One day, while Louis was sitting in a cafe listening to a friend reading a newspaper, he pricked up his ears when he heard the news that a French Army Captain had developed a system of writing in dots and dashes, to be used in darkness. The words could be read by touch without striking a light. This bit of discovery excited Louis and he immediately went in search of the Captain to get all the information. The Captain explained the code he had set up, and how if impressions are pressed on a thick paper with an awl, the protuberances can be felt on the other side. A dot could mean "advance", two dots "retreat" and so on. It struck Louis that a whole language can be built on this system.

Braille never rested from that day until five years later when the first book using the " Braille system " was published. Ironically, the instrument, the awl, which blinded his eyes was the same that wrote books for the blind. This Braille system was tried out for five years and all the improvements made He used a key with 6 holes and through various combinations of dots, arrived at all the alphabet, punctuation, symbols and contractions.

At the age of 27 he wrote in the Braille system about John Milton, the blind poet. He demonstrated at the institute how he could " punch write " as rapidly as any other letters. But his colleagues were very jealous of him and said that Louis memorized selections and pretended to read. Louis however did not mind such remarks but continued his work. He even punched out mathematical symbols and showed how to solve equations ; he worked out a musical code and became a skilled organist.

One day one of his pupils, a girl, gave a piano recital before a fashionable French audience. It was well done and the audience did not stop their applause until she tapped her way up to the stage and declared that her good performance was due to her master Louis Braille, who had prepared the music notes for her. She also remarked on the jealousy of Louis Braille's colleagues and how the Braille system could not find wide use because of it.

The French press understood the trouble and immediately gave due honour to the great man. People thronged to Louis Braille's bed side (for he took seriously ill by then) to congratulate him. " This is the third time in my life I have permitted myself to weep," he said. " First when I was blinded. Second when I heard about the ' night writing ' and now because I know my life was not a failure."

He died a few days later. Braille's system has become so much a part of education now. Today it has been adapted even to the Chinese language and a number of magazines around the world. A bust of Louis Braille is erected outside the saddler's shop at Coupvray. In India there are large blind schools in places like Madras, Palayamkottai and Dehra Dun.



Of all thieves, fools are the worst, they rob you of time and temper.



Wheat Recipes

My Dear Leela,

I am very glad to hear that you find it a great relief to have a substitute for rice preparation. Beside Ragi you can introduce wheat also, which will stand in goodstead of rice. I will give you a few of them below and you can try them. You will find them very tasty and easy to prepare.

Yours,
Lakshmi Venkatraman.

WHEAT THENKUYAL

Ingredients required :

White wheat flour ..	1 ollock.
Blackgram	¼ ,,
Salt powder	¾ table-spoon.
Butter	2 oz.
Cumin seeds or omum ..	1 tea-spoon.
Any oil to fry with ..	1 ollock.

Method of preparing :

Cook the wheat flour in steam for 10 minutes, without moisturing. Fry gram to light brown and pound finely. Clean the cumin seeds or omum, mix all the ingredients together, knead well and make a thick dough by adding little water. Boil oil, press the dough through a Thenkuyal Padi into small rounds in the oil. When quite crisp turn and fry the other side and remove. Prepare the rest in the same manner. Keep in an air-tight tin.

RAVE KOLA VADAI

Ingredients :

Ravai	1 ollock.
Coconut	1
Butter	2 oz.
White sesamum	1 table-spoon.
Asafoetida	1 tamarind seed size.
Salt powder	1 table-spoon.
Chilly powder	1 tea-spoon.
Green chillies	4
Coriandar leaves ..	3 pies.
Curry leaves	2 stems.
Any oil to fry with ..	1 ollock.

Method of preparing :

Fry ravai in a table-spoon of oil for 5 minutes. Scrape coconut, cut the chillies and leaves finely. Dissolve asafoetida in a tea-spoon of water. Mix all the ingredients together, make a thick dough by adding little water. Take a lime size of the dough, roll to a finger's thickness on a wooden board with the palms. Stretch for about 8 or 10 inches long and make a circle of the roll, leaving a small hole in the centre. Make about 8 or 9 in this manner and fry in the oil until both sides become crisp. Store in air-tight tins.

WHEAT FLOUR THATTE

Ingredients :

Wheat flour	1 ollock.
Coconut ..	1
Butter	2 oz.
Groundnuts	½ ollock.
Bengalgram dhall ..	1 table-spoon.
Pepper	1 tea-spoon.
Cumin seeds	1 ,,
Salt powder	1 table-spoon.
Curry leaves	2 stems.
Coriandar leaves ..	3 pies.
Oil	1 ollock.

Method of preparing :

Fry flour with a spoon of oil for 5 minutes. Soak bengalgram dhall for 2 hours in hot water, squeeze out water. Break the groundnuts into halves. Break pepper and cumin seeds. Mince the leaves. Mix all the ingredients together and make a thick dough. Take a small lime size of the dough, press on a dry white cloth into small discs as thinly as possible. Make about 10 or 12. Fry in boiling oil until both sides become crisp. Store in an air-tight tin.

School of Catering

S. Williams

THE School of Catering, sponsored by the All-India Women's Food Council, was opened on the 10th of July 1953. The course lasted for 15 days during which eight subjects, comprising of physiology, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, psychology, first-aid, book-keeping, economics and catering were dealt with.

Besides the lectures given on the above subjects the students were taken out for practical training to the B. & C. Canteen, General Hospital kitchen, Mysore Cafe, Annapoorna Cafe, Government Milk Factory and the King Institute.

The course is really interesting and very useful especially to people who are in the line such as hotel-keepers, persons concerned with the hostels, institutions and to all house-wives One might be accustomed to run a hostel or a hotel merely by experience alone, but the School of Catering helps to educate them to run their respective concerns on a more hygienic, scientific and economical way, and also provides them with a good knowledge in *Nutrition* to plan a *well balanced* diet which is very essential for a catering line.

The practical training gives an idea of how one could improve the present conditions, practices, procedures and customs.

On the whole the lectures were very interesting and the practical training given at various places was very useful to me for I am in the line.

At the end of the training a break-up party was arranged on the 25th of July 1953 to give away the certificates.

NON-RICE IDDLI

Blackgram dhall	..	..	1 ollock.
Greengram dhall	..	..	1 ,,
Salt ..	..	..	2 tea-spoons.
Pepper (crushed)	..	..	¼ tea-spoon.
Ginger (sliced)	..	..	2 tea-spoons.
Cashewnuts ..	..	..	1 oz.

Method : Soak dhalls for 3 hours in water, grind into fine paste, add salt and mix well—leave over night (roughly 6 hours). Add cashewnuts, pepper and 1½ ollocks of water. Mix well and steam. Serve hot.

CARROT HALWA

Ingredients :

Carrots	..	..	1 lb.
Sugar	..	..	1 ,,
Vegetable ghee	..	..	12 oz.
Cardamoms	..	..	1
Milk	..	..	¼ Madras measure.

Method :

(1) Clean, wash and grate carrots.

(2) Cook in milk till tender.

(3) Add sugar and stir well on fire till thick consistency is obtained.

(4) Add ghee slowly and heat for 5 minutes.

(5) Remove from fire and add cardamoms and serve.

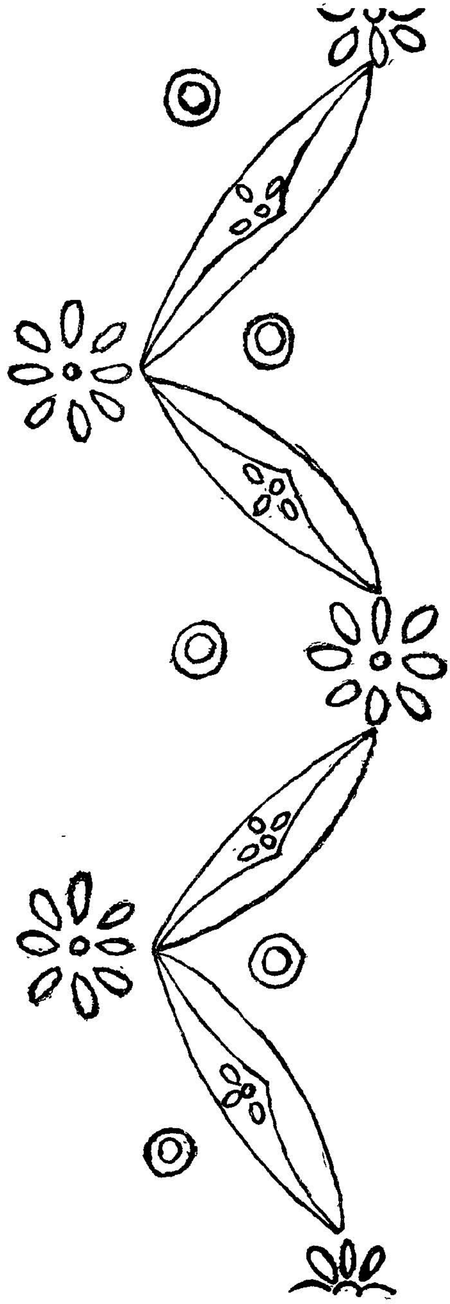
A Good Cook

"A house-keeper or the house-wife is a very important person in the home. She has to mix both the manual and mental work in her daily life. She has to put her heart and soul in the work of the home. She is not only the queen of the home, but also an important subject of the home, as she is responsible for the finance, health, education and fine arts. Her work is equal to one of the great statesmen of the country."

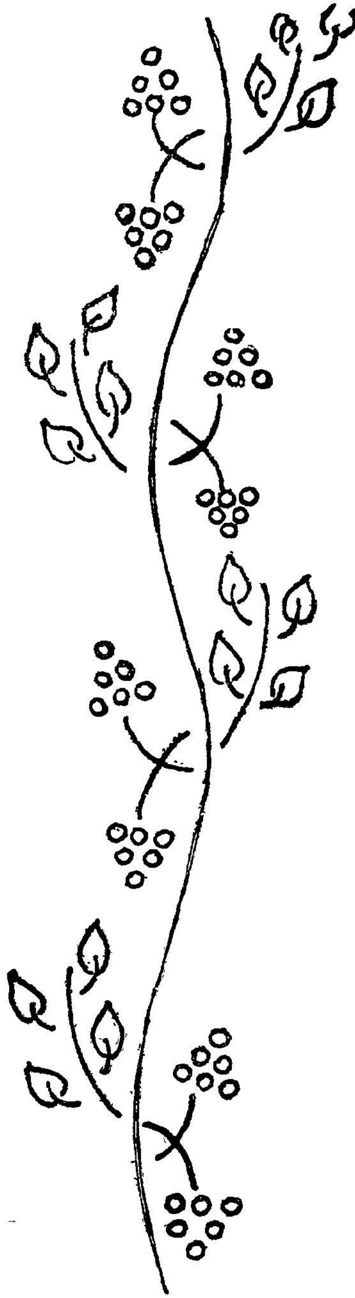
"A cook in the kitchen is more important than a doctor in the dispensary."

"A good cook is half a physician."

Embroidery Designs



For a skirt border



For a sari border

Vanamahotsava

VANAMAHOTSAVA was celebrated in all the branches of the Department by holding special meetings at which the meaning and importance of Vanamahotsava were explained and also by having saplings planted. Three hundred rubber saplings were distributed among the hill tribes of Araku Branch. Some of the trees planted in the branches were Jack tree, Cashewnut, Mango, Curry leaf, Pappaya, Coconut, Lemon, Coffee, Guava, Casuarina, and Rain tree. During house visits, help was given in choosing suitable places in the homes and villages and instructions were given as how to take care of them. A record was made of the surviving plants planted during the last two years.

School Admissions

The Assistant Women's Welfare Officer, Cuddapah, helped three Harijan boys financially to get into the High School. The Guild of Service, Cuddapah, paid Rs. 8–8–0 for another Harijan boy who had passed his III Form, to get into the High School. One member in Cuddapah, two members in Kozhikode and another in Nellore were found seats in Teachers' Training Colleges. Two failed candidates of the Rural College, Kozhikode, have sent their application for reappearing in the Public Examination to be held in November 1953. One member from Santanuthalapadu has been admitted in the Andhra Mahila Sabha Nursing Home and another for Teacher's Training in Ongole.

Employment

One deserted woman was found a job to carry water in two houses in Thevarkulam.



Spinning contest in Poolambadi, Trichy District.

In Kuruvikulam, two poor girls were found domestic work and the employers have agreed to give them food, clothing and Rs. 3 monthly.

Subsidiary Industry and Supplementary Income

Sixty-five towels were woven during the month in Visakhapatnam by two members earning Rs. 21. In Nileshwar, a member was able to buy a gold chain for Rs. 74 out of her savings from the Subsidiary Industry earnings. In Nellore, Rs. 18–9–0 was earned through handicrafts, Rs. 10 in Chemudugunta through mat-weaving, Rs. 6–14–0 through spinning and knitting in Podalakur. One member earned Rs. 12–8–0 in Vallur by weaving 200 yards of Navar, 56 members in Kallupatti earned Rs. 476–10–8 and 60 members Rs. 285 in Pudupatti by spinning alone. Seven Chinnalapatti members earned Rs. 14–4–0 through tailoring, crochet lace and chakki grinding. Ten women took part in hospital stitching in Mangalore and earned Rs. 33–11–0. In Tirunelveli, the Weavers' Co-operative Society,

Melapalayam, gave 270 towels to the centre members for knitting the ends at the rate of 6 pies per towel.

Special Work

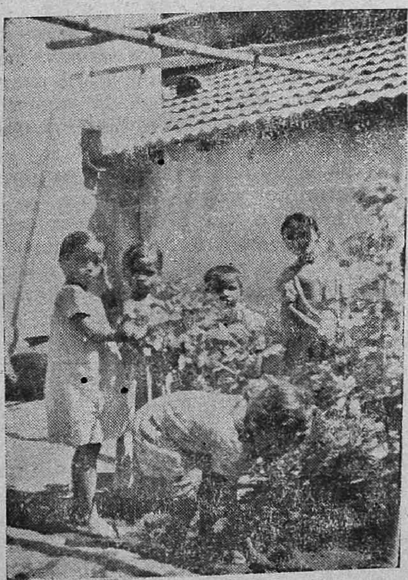
There were epidemics of Cholera in Padur, Payacaraopet and Chemudugunta. The organizers investigated the cases and brought the circumstances to the attention of the health authorities so that inoculation could be carried out. A kind of dysentery had broken out in Malabar district and many children died. However 25 cases were arrested in the early stages with the supply of Kaolin from the Department of Women's Welfare Office. Advice was given in every home. In Pinarayi the organizer is helping a member to get the pension of her husband. The organizer in Mattanur was able to bring about reconciliation between a husband and his wife.

Centre Work

Monthly meetings were conducted in all the centres. In Arasavalli, the meeting was presided by Srimathi Swarna Bai, Secretary of Mahila Sangh, Srikakulam. Some of the important talks given at Calingapatnam were "The care to be taken in attending to the new born twins; Care to be taken in attending on a child born in the seventh month; care of pregnant women from 5th to 9th month; difference between breast milk and cow's milk and how to give the latter to the new born child."



Drill—Pre-basic item,
Poolambadi, Trichy District.



Garden work of pre-basic children,
Poolambadi, Trichy District.

Medical Help

In the new branch opened at Krishnapuram, Ramanathapuram District, there is good scope for work. During the month, 5 cases were taken to Mangalore hospital, and one to Madurai for eye trouble. Three T.B. cases are under investigation. Old cloth was given for the slum children for dressing wounds. About four hundred patients were given help in Pudupatti, and two hundred and seventy-two in Dorasanipalli.

Donation

The District Collector of Tirunelveli gave four barrels of skimmed milk and multi-vitamin tablets for distribution among the poor children. The Rural Welfare Officer gave cardboards for charts and the use of gramophone in Podalakur. Sri A. Krishnayya has supplied Podalakur Branch with a charka and Vallur Branch with five tracers for leather work. The Krishnapuram Village Committee has supplied the branch with seventeen aluminium tumblers for use of pre-basic children.

Round The Famine Relief Work Centres

P. S. R. Anjaneyulu
(Joint Honorary Secretary, Andhra Council of Social Services.)

Nearly after the lapse of one year I had the pleasure of visiting once again the Famine Relief Work Centres at Vepencheri, Karvetnagar and Thavanampalle in Chittoor District. These centres were run by the Women's Welfare Department out of the funds placed at the disposal of Srimathi Durga Bai by the Prime Minister of India for Famine Relief Work in Rayalaseema last year.

During my present visit I could notice that there has been considerable improvement and growth in the activities of these Relief Centres. Many women and girls were briskly and cheerfully carrying on their daily routine of work in all the sections. Spinning, weaving, carding, ginning and mat weaving are the main items of work in all these places. Besides, sarees, bed sheets, towels and dhoties are also being manufactured there. The average number of women and girls taking advantage of these centres and learning the crafts is between 100 and 140 at each centre daily. There is considerable scope for further expansion of work provided necessary finances are available.

In all these centres large quantities of finished articles are awaiting disposal. Last year also the same difficulty was experienced. This may be due to the high cost of production and the competition in the open market. Marketing facilities are very meagre. The Government should make adequate arrangements for the sale of these goods. I would suggest to the Government the desirability of opening a few sales depots, for two or three districts combined in some central place where all the finished articles of the Women's Welfare Department centres and other department centres of the Government doing similar work can be pooled, exhibited and sold.

These Famine Relief Work Centres, I understand, are likely to be closed down from 1st October 1953. No doubt conditions have improved than last year and the distress is relieved to a fair degree and the emergency tided over. Yet in certain areas people still are experiencing a lot of difficulties due to various factors. I have personally seen in Karvetnagar nearly 500 persons—men, women and children—standing in long rows to receive their daily quota of gruel.

What the future policy of the Andhra State Government will be towards these centres and the normal centres of the department remains to be seen. A large number of women and girls have learnt a few crafts during the course of one year since these centres were started. Their future plight after the closure of the centres will have to be seriously thought of by the Government and the State Advisory Council of the Department. Some scheme have to be evolved, say on co-operative basis, and help must be rendered to these unfortunate women in future as well. They are not in a position economically to start any independent work themselves. There will be no alternative left for them except to fall back upon public charity as before for their very existence as human beings, if the centres are closed.

The darkest hour is nearest the dawn.

സൌഭാഗ്യം

സ്ത്രീജനാഭിവൃദ്ധി വകുപ്പ്

പുസ്തകം 9 | സപ്തെമ്പർ 1953 | ലക്കം 9

ചെറുകഥ

സ്ത്രീ പാവയല്ല

(ടി. ജി. നെടുങ്ങാടി)

“ഹതല്ല്യലൊ മാനേസരെ ങ്ങടെ സ്ക്കോളില് ഒയ്‌വുണ്ടോ ?” കുഞ്ഞാലവി ചോദിച്ചു.

“എന്തെയ് ?” ചേക്കുട്ടി മാനേജർ.

“ഞമ്മക്ക് ഹൊരാള് ങ്ങേർന്ന് ഒയ്‌വ് ങ്ങെങ്കിൽ—?”

“അനക്ക് അനിസമ്മാര് ഇല്ല്യാലൊ”

“ങ്ങ്ന്ന് കുട്ടീക്കോളി. ഹന്നാല് ഏലാക്ക്വോ ?”

“എന്ത്ര്ത്തോത്ത് കാരിയം പറ. ജ്ജ് ആള് ആനക്കള്ളനാ” മാനേജർ ചിരിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് പറഞ്ഞു.

“ങ്ങള് ഒയ്‌വ് സര്യാക്ക്വോ ?”

“ഒണ്ടാക്കാംന്ന് കുട്ടീക്കൊ. അനക്കാവോണ്ട് ഇമ്മിണി കായൊന്നും ബേണ്ടാലൊ. ഞമ്മള് തമ്മാമ്മീലല്ലെ. ജ്ജ് ഒള്ളോനും ഞാം കസ്റ്റത്തിലായോനും” മാനേജർ സൂചിപ്പിച്ചു.

“ഹതൊന്നും പററില്ല്യാച്ചോളി. ലോഹ്യം കായിന്റെ കാരിയത്തീല് പററൂലാ. സരി, ഞാം ഒന്ന് ശെയ്യാമ്പോണ് ഏന്ന ബെച്ചാല്ശെയ്യ് ചേലിക്കാന്ന് കുട്ടിക്കോളി.”

“എന്ത്ര്ത്താത്ത് ?”

“ഓളെച്ച് കെട്ടണം”

“ച്ചാല് ?”

“ആയിസേനേ”

“ഹേത്ത്—?”

“തൊരബൻ ഏദ കാക്കാന്റെ മോളെ”.

“പക്കെങ്കില് ജ്ജ്പ്പം എന്ത്ര്ത്ത്നേ ഞമ്മടെ സ്ക്കോളില് ഒയ്‌വ്ണ്ടോന്ന് അന്വേസിച്ച് ?”

“ഓളെ അബ്ട്ന്ന് ബിട്ത്തികിട്ട്യാല് ങ്ങള് കൊട്ടക്ക്വോന്ന് അറ്യാൻ”.

“ആലോസിക്കാം. ബിട്ത്തിക്ക്വോ”

“പിന്നെ പററൂലാന്ന് പറ്യ്യോ ?”

“അച്ചേലിക്ക് ഞമ്മള് പ്രോവത്തിക്ക്വോ ? അനക്ക് പിരാന്താ ?”

“അല്ല ചോച്ചാന്നേളള”

“അനക്ക് ബല്ലിച്ചകൊണോം ബേണ്ടെ ചെറ്ക്കാ. ഏതക്കാകായിന്ന് ഗതില്ലാത്തോനല്ലെ ?

“ഓള്ക്ക് കായ് കിട്ടൂലെ ?”

“അയിന്ന് ?

“അക്കായ് ഞമ്മക്കാവൂലെ ?”

“അവേക്കും. തരാംവ്വാച്ചാല് നോക്കിക്കൊ”

അങ്ങനെ കുഞ്ഞാലവി മാനേജരുമായി ആലോചന നടത്തി. ഏററവും അത്യാവശ്യമായ ഒരു കാര്യമാണോ

യാൾ നിൎവ്വഹിച്ചതു്. പണ്ടത്തെ കാലമാണെങ്കിൽ വിട്ടു ത്തികൊണ്ടുപോന്നു്, പിന്നീടു മാനേജരെ കണ്ടാലും പോരായ്മയുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. ഇന്നു് അതൊക്കെ മാറിപ്പോയി. ആയിഷ സ്കൂൾ ഗെയ്റ്റു് കടക്കുമ്പോഴേക്കും നൂറുപേരുണ്ടാവും അകത്തേക്കു് അപേക്ഷകന്മാരായിട്ടു്. അത്രയും അദ്ധ്യാപകന്മാർ വൎദ്ധിച്ച കാലമാണു്. ആ വാസ്തവം കുഞ്ഞാലവി എങ്ങനെയോ മനസ്സിലാക്കിയിട്ടുണ്ടു്.

കുഞ്ഞാലവിയുടെ രണ്ടാം കല്യാണത്തിനുള്ള ആലോചനയാണിതു്. വയസ്സു് ഇരുപത്തിയഞ്ചു് കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടേ ഉള്ളൂ. ആദ്യത്തെ ഭാൎയ്യയെ തീൎക്കുവാൻ കാരണമെന്തെന്നു് ആരെങ്കിലും ചോദിച്ചാൽ അയാൾ പറയും. "ഓളു് നശ്ശൂലം പുടിച്ചോളേർന്നു." അവൾ വന്നു കയറിയതു മുതൽ കൃഷി നന്നായിട്ടില്ലപോലും. വിത്തു മാറി കൃഷിചെയ്യൽ മുതലായതൊന്നാക്കേടുകൾ ഇടക്കിടക്കു് പററിക്കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. എല്ലാററിനും കാരണം പെണ്ണിന്റെ തകരാറാണെന്നു് അയാൾ ധരിച്ചുവശായി. "ആളക്കു് കോരിക്കൊടുക്കാനല്ല ഞാം തെണ്ടിച്ചണു്." ആ സ്ത്രീ കൂടുതൽ ധൎമ്മിഷ്ഠയായിരുന്നുവെന്നാണു് മറെറാരാക്ഷേപം. എങ്ങനെയായാലും ആ ബന്ധം ചുരുങ്ങിയ കാലമേ നിലനിന്നുള്ളൂ.

നാലഞ്ചു പേരുള്ള ഒരു കുഡുംബത്തിന്നു് സുഖമായി ജീവിക്കുവാനും, അത്യാവശ്യം വില്ക്കാനും മാത്രം നെല്ലു് കുഞ്ഞാലവിക്കു് വരവുണ്ടു്. എന്നിട്ടും കുറച്ചു കാലമായി ഒരു മോഹം ഉള്ളിൽ കടന്നുകൂടിയിരിക്കുകയാണു്. എന്തെങ്കിലും വരുമാനമുള്ള ഒരു പെണ്ണിനെ കല്യാണം കഴിക്കുവാൻ. അതു് ദൂരത്തെങ്ങാനും പോയി ഉദ്യോഗം ഭരിക്കുന്ന പെണ്ണായിക്കൂടെന്നു് നിൎബ്ബന്ധവുമാണു്. തന്റെ കൈപ്പിടിയിൽ ഒതുങ്ങണം. അതായതു് ഉദ്യോഗം അടുത്താവണം. തന്റെ ദൃഷ്ടിയിൽനിന്നു വിട്ടുപോകരുതു്. അങ്ങിനെ കഴിയുമ്പോഴാണു് ആയിഷ പരിശീലനം കഴിഞ്ഞുവന്നു ഒരു സ്കൂളിൽ ചേൎന്നതു്.

വിവരവും വരുമാനവുമുള്ള ആയിഷയെ വിവാഹം ചെയ്യുവാനുള്ള തന്റെ ആഗ്രഹത്തെ സാധൂകരിക്കുവാൻ അയാൾ മൂന്നു കാരണങ്ങളാണു് സാധാരണ പറയാറു്. "ച്ച് കൊറച്ചു് കിട്ടാണ്ടു്. അയിന്റെ കണക്കും കയ്യും കൂട്ടാനു് ഇപ്പം ഇമ്മിണി കായ് ആ നായരുട്ടിക്കു കൊടുക്ക്ണു്" എന്നതാണു് ഒന്നാമത്തേതു്. അതിൽ കാൎയ്യമുണ്ടു്. കണക്കു കൂട്ടാനും പാട്ടം പിരിക്കാനും ഇപ്പോൾ ഒരു കാൎയ്യസ്ഥനുണ്ടു്. പ്രവൃത്തിയെടുക്കുവാൻ അയാൾക്കു അറിയാം. പക്ഷെ എഴുതാനും വായിക്കുവാനും അറിയാത്തതുകൊണ്ടു് കണക്കുകൂട്ടൽ വലിയ പ്രശ്നമാണു്. വിവരമുള്ള സ്ത്രീയെ കല്യാണം കഴിച്ചാൽ ആ വിഷമം ലഘൂകരിക്കാമല്ലൊ.

"ച്ച് ചായക്കും ബീഡിക്കും കായ് വേണം. അതിന്റെ കായ് ഓളടേതോണ്ടു് കയിഞ്ഞാല്ലു് നെല്ലു് ബിക്കാതെ കയ്ച്ചാലൊ" അതാണു് രണ്ടാമത്തെ കാരണം. കുഞ്ഞാലവി തന്റെ ഒന്നാം വിവാഹംകൊണ്ടു് ചില യാഥാൎത്ഥ്യങ്ങൾ മനസ്സിലാക്കിയിട്ടുണ്ടു്. അന്നു് എപ്പോഴും പണത്തിനു് തിട്ടക്കമാണു്. അവൾക്കു യാതൊരു സമ്പാദ്യവും ഇല്ലാതിരുന്നതുകൊണ്ടാണതെന്നു് അയാൾക്കു ബോദ്ധ്യപ്പെട്ടു.

"ഓളു്ടെ ഉപ്പും അത്രക്കു് കൊണം പോരാ" ചിലർ ആയിഷയെപ്പററി കുഞ്ഞാലവിയെ മനസ്സിലാക്കുവാൻ ശ്രമിച്ചു.

അപ്പോഴാണു് അയാൾ മൂന്നാമത്തെ കാരണം പറയാറു്. "ഹതു് എന്തു്ര്ത്തൊ ആയിക്കോട്ടെ. ച്ച് ഓളെ ഇമ്മിണി പിടിച്ചക്ക്ണു്". അതാണു് കാൎയ്യം. തറവാട്ടു മഹിമപോരെങ്കിൽ വേണ്ട. പുരുഷനു് സ്ത്രീയെ തൃപ്തിയാവണം. സ്ത്രീക്കു പുരുഷനേയും. പക്ഷെ കുഞ്ഞാലവിക്കു് ആയിഷയെപററി തോന്നിയ തൃപ്തി ഭയങ്കരമാണു്. ആകപ്പാടെ കണ്ടാൽ തരക്കേടില്ലാത്തവളാണവൾ. അതു് കുഞ്ഞാലവിക്കും തോന്നിയതാണു്. തന്റെ ചേറുമുണ്ടും മററും അവളുടെ പരിഷ്ക്കരിച്ച ഉടുപ്പിനോടു് താരതമ്യപ്പെടുത്തിനോക്കി. തന്റെ വിവരവും അവളുടെ വിവരവും താരതമ്യപ്പെടുത്തി. അവ രണ്ടിലും ആയിഷക്കാണു് മെച്ചം. തന്റെ തറവാട്ടു സ്ഥിതിയുമായി തട്ടിച്ചുനോക്കുമ്പോഴൊ ? "ഹത്ര പത്രാസ്സുള്ള പെണ്ണിനേം കായ്ള്ളോന്റെ കാലിന്റെ ചോട്ടില്ബര്ത്താം" അയാൾ ഉള്ളിൽ കരുതിയതാണിതു്. എന്നിട്ടാണു് ശ്രമം.

കുഞ്ഞാലവി കല്യാണം ആലോചിച്ചു.

"ഉം കജ്ജൂലാ" ഏനുക്കാക്ക.

"എന്തെയ് ?"

"ആമ്മടേല് കായ്ല്യ്".

"ബേണ്ടാ" കുഞ്ഞാലവി തീൎത്തു പറഞ്ഞു. പണമില്ലായ്മ വിവാഹത്തിന്നു് പ്രതിബന്ധമാവരുതു്.

"ഹതു് ഉക്ഷേപ്പരം" ഏനുക്കാക്കാക്കു് പിന്നേയും സംശയമാണു്. "ച്ച് തൃപ്ത്യാ" കുഞ്ഞാലവി ഉറപ്പിച്ചു പറഞ്ഞു.

ഏനുക്കാക്ക ഉള്ളിൽ അതിയായി സന്തോഷിച്ചു. ധാരാളം നെല്ലു കിട്ടുവാനുള്ളവനാണു് ജാമാതാവായി വരുന്നതു്. വലിയ ചിലവൊന്നും കൂടാതെ ക്രിയകൾ നടത്താമെന്നു് സമ്മതിക്കുക ! ചില്ലറയാണൊ കാൎയ്യം ? ഒരു പെണ്ണിനെ സാധാരണനിലയിൽ കെട്ടിച്ചുകൊടുക്കുകയാണെങ്കിൽ എത്രമാത്രം ചിലവുവരും ! ഇരിയ്ക്കുന്ന പുര ഒരു പക്ഷെ പണയം കെട്ടേണ്ടിവന്നേക്കാം. അതൊന്നും കൂടാതെ കഴിഞ്ഞാൽ . . . . . പണയം കെട്ടുകയും ഒരുപക്ഷെ വില്ക്കുകതന്നെയും ചെയ്യേണ്ടിവരാവുന്ന ഘട്ടങ്ങൾ ഇനിയും വരുന്നുണ്ടു്. ആയിഷയെ കൊടുത്താൽ രണ്ടു പെൺകുട്ടികൾ പിന്നേയും ബാക്കിയാണു്. അവൎക്കു ഉദ്യോഗവുമില്ല.

"ഹിതാണ് ഞാം കസ്റ്റപ്പെട്ട് പടിപ്പിച്ചേന്റെ കൊണം" ഏനുകാക്ക വിചാരിച്ചു.

*　*　*　*　*　*

കല്യാണം കഴിഞ്ഞ് കുറച്ചു ദിവസം കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടാണ്.

"ജ്ജ് ഇബ്ട്ന്ന് പിരിഞ്ഞാളം" കുഞ്ഞാലവി ഭാര്യയെ ഉപദേശിച്ചു.

"എന്തിന്?"

"അനക്ക് ഹെന്റെ കടീന്റടുത്ത് പ്രോവര്‍ത്തി ഏല്ലാക്കാം".

"അത് പററില്ല" ആയിഷ പറഞ്ഞു.

"എന്തെയ്?" കുഞ്ഞാലവിയുടെ ഭാവത്തിനു മാററം സംഭവിച്ചു.

"മനാട്ടീസ്സുകൊടുക്കാണ്ടെ പിരിഞ്ഞൂടാ" ആയിഷ പറഞ്ഞു.

"ഹതെന്തരുത്താള്ള്?"

"അതങ്ങനെയാണ്"

"ഞാൻ അക്കാര്യം ആലോസിച്ചില്ല. പ്പം അനക്ക് പിരിഞ്ഞൂടാ, അല്ലെ?"

കുഞ്ഞാലവിക്കു തെല്ല് നിരാശ തോന്നി. തന്റെ പ്ലാനുകൾ പ്രവൃത്തി പഥത്തിൽ കൊണ്ടുവരുവാൻ വൈഷമ്യങ്ങൾ വരുകയാണ്.

കുഞ്ഞാലവി ചേക്കുട്ടി മേനേജരോട് കാര്യം പറഞ്ഞു.

"ഞാം അന്ന് അക്കാര്യം അന്നോട് പറയാം ബിട്ടതാ അതാ അയിന്റെ നെയമം"

"ഹെന്നാല്ല് പെണ്ണ് ഹെന്റെ കടീ പാത്ത് നടന്നുപോകട്ടെ" കുഞ്ഞാലവി മനസ്സുകൊണ്ട് തീർച്ചപ്പെടുത്തി. കല്യാണം കഴിഞ്ഞു പിന്നേയും അവളുടേ സ്വന്തം വീട്ടിൽ താമസിപ്പിക്കുവാൻ കുഞ്ഞാലവി തയ്യാറില്ല.

"മൂന്നു നാഴിക നടക്കാൻ എനിക്ക് പ്രയാസമുണ്ട്" ആയിഷ കാര്യം വ്യക്തമാക്കി.

"ഒയിനെന്താ?"

"എന്റെ കടീന്റെ അടുത്ത് സ്കൂളായിരിക്കുക. എന്നിട്ടു ഞാൻ മൂന്നു നാഴിക നടക്കാച്ചാല് ———?" അവളുടെ കണ്ണുകളിൽ ഒരു ചോദ്യചിഹ്നം തങ്ങിനിന്നു.

"അത്ച് ഏററല്യങ്കിലൊ?" കുഞ്ഞാലവി ശൈരവത്തിലാണതു ചോദിച്ചത്. ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥയാണെന്നു വിചാരിച്ചു സാമുദായിക മര്യാദയിൽ വിട്ടുവീഴ്ച ചെയ്യാമൊ

ആയാൾ തുടർന്നു: "അന്റെ കടി മൂന്നു നായിക ഉക്കത്താന്ത് കൂട്ടിക്കൊ".

"എന്റെ ബാപ്പാന്റെകൂടെ പാക്കണതില് അക്കെന്താ ഇക്കുക്കേട്?"

"ഇസ്സക്കേടുണ്ടായിട്ടല്ല. ജ്ജ് ന്റെ കടീലാ പാക്കാ. ജ്ജ് ന്റെ കീയിലാ മേപ്പാല്. അക്കാര്യം ബേറെതന്ന്യ"

ആയിഷ ഒന്നും പറഞ്ഞില്ല.

കുഞ്ഞാലവി ഒട്ടുനേരം ആലോചിച്ചു. പരിഹാരം കാണേണ്ട ഒരു പ്രശ്നമാണിത്. തന്റെ വീട്ടിൽനിന്നു നടന്നു വന്ന് പ്രവൃത്തിയെടുക്കുകയെന്നത് ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടുള്ള കാര്യമാണ്. ആയിഷയുടെ പൂമേനി ആയാസംകൊണ്ട് വാടുവാൻ വിടുന്നതിൽ ആയാൾക്കു വേദനയുണ്ട്. അതിനേക്കാൾ വേദനിപ്പിക്കുന്ന കാര്യം മറെറാന്നാണ്. "ഉമ്മാന്റെ കടീല് പാപ്പിച്ചാല് ഓളടെ കായി കിട്ടൂലാ. പിന്നെന്തിനേത്?" അവരുടെ വീട്ടിൽ താമസിക്കുമ്പോൾ അവളുടെ ശമ്പളം കണക്കു പറഞ്ഞു വാങ്ങുന്നത് മര്യാദകേടല്ലെ? കുറച്ചു മൂലധനം ഇറക്കിയാലൊ? ആയിരം ഉറുപ്പിക ഇറക്കി ഒരു വീടുവാങ്ങി സ്കൂളിന്റെ സമീപത്തു താമസം തുടങ്ങിയാൽ ഇറക്കുന്ന പണത്തിന്റെ പലിശയും അവളുടെ ശമ്പളവും തമ്മിൽ ഒത്തുപോകുമോ എന്നായി അയാളുടെ ആലോചന.

"ഞാം സ്ക്കൂളിന്റടുത്ത് ഒരു ബീട് ഏലാക്കീട്ടുണ്ട്. ജ്ജ് ഇച്ചേലക്ക് നടന്നാല് ച്ച് ഹത് സഹിച്ചൂടാ" ഒരു ദിവസം കുഞ്ഞാലവി ഭാര്യയെ അറിയിച്ചു. ഇപ്പോൾ നടക്കുന്ന അര നാഴിക വഴി തന്നെ കുറെ കൂടുതലാണെന്ന് തനിക്കു തോന്നുന്നുണ്ടെന്നും, അതിനുള്ള പോംവഴി ഒരു വീട്ട് വിലക്കു വാങ്ങലാണെന്നും കുഞ്ഞാലവി ഭാര്യയെ പറഞ്ഞു ബോദ്ധ്യപ്പെടുത്തി. ആയിഷ എന്തു സമാധാനം പറയാനാണ്? തന്റെ നന്മക്കല്ലെ? എന്തൊരു സ്നേഹമുള്ള ഭർത്താവ്! പക്ഷെ ഭർത്താവിനെക്കൊണ്ട് വെറുതെ പണം ചിലവാക്കിക്കുന്നത് അവൾക്ക് സഹിക്കുമൊ?

"ഞാൻ പറയണത് കേക്കാച്ചാല് വീട് വാങ്ങണ്ട, ഞാൻ നടന്നോളാം".

"അനക്ക് ബല്ലിച്ച ദീനം പുടിച്ചാല് അന്റെ ഉമ്മാക്കും ബാപ്പാക്കും ചുടണേക്കാട്ടിലും ചൂട്ച്ച്, ഉണ്ടാവാം"

അക്കാര്യത്തിൽ ആയിഷക്കു അഭിമാനമാണ് തോന്നിയത്.

കുഞ്ഞാലവി പണമിറക്കി സ്കൂളിന്റെ സമീപത്ത് കടം വന്നു തുലഞ്ഞ ഒരു സാധു ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നു. തന്റെ വീടും പറമ്പും വിററു കടം വീട്ടി ചെറിയൊരു കുര പണിയണമെന്നായിരുന്നു അങ്ങോരുടെ ആലോചന. ആത് കുഞ്ഞാലവി അറിഞ്ഞു. പക്ഷെ വില ജാസ്തിയാണ്. ആയിരം ഉറുപ്പികയിലധികം ഇറക്കുവാൻ ആയാൾ ഒരുങ്ങി

യിരുന്നില്ല. ഇപ്പുറക്കു രണ്ടായിരത്തിൽ ഒരു കാശു കുറച്ചു ചോദിക്കയും വേണ്ട.

കുഞ്ഞാലവി തർക്കിച്ചില്ല. തല്ക്കാലം കടം മേടിക്കുവാൻ തീർച്ചയാക്കി. പലിശ കുറച്ചു അധികമാകുമെന്നെ ഉള്ളൂ.

മററാരെങ്കിലും ചാടി വീഴുന്നതിന്നു മുമ്പ് റജിസ്റ്റർ കഴിക്കുവാനായി കുഞ്ഞാലവിയുടെ ബദ്ധപ്പാട്. രണ്ടായിരത്തി ഇരുനൂറുവരെ കൊടുക്കാനാളുണ്ടെന്നു കേട്ടു.

വെറും നാലു ദിവസം കൊണ്ട് കാര്യമെല്ലാം തീർന്നു ദമ്പതികൾ പുതിയ പുരയിൽ താമസം തുടങ്ങി. കടം മേടിച്ചിട്ടാണെങ്കിലും കുഞ്ഞാലവിക്കു സമാധാനമായി.

അടുത്ത മാസം ശമ്പളം കിട്ടിയപ്പോൾ ആയിഷ പറഞ്ഞു "കൊറച്ച് പണം കടില് കൊടുക്കണ്ടെ ?"

"കജ്ജ്ലാ"

"വീട് പണയമെഴുതിയാണ് ബാപ്പ എന്നെ പഠിപ്പിച്ചത്"

"ച്ച് കേക്കണ്ട. കജ്ജ്ലാ" കുഞ്ഞാലവി തീർത്തു പറഞ്ഞു മുഖം തിരിച്ചു.

"എന്നാലും ആ ചെറുക്കന്നെ പഠിപ്പിച്ചാലെ ?

"കജ്ജ്ലാ" ആയാൾ പിന്നേയും വജ്രം കണക്കെ നില്ക്കുകയാണ്. അവളുടെ ആഗ്രഹങ്ങളെല്ലാം അതിന്നു മുമ്പിൽ ചിതറിപ്പോവുന്നു. താൻ സുഖമായി ജീവിക്കുമ്പോൾ തന്റെ അച്ഛനും അമ്മയും അടുത്ത വീട്ടിൽ നരകിക്കുക. അതു കണ്ണിൽ കാണുന്നില്ലെങ്കിലും സമാധാനിക്കാം. ഹൃദയമുള്ള ആയിഷക്ക് അതു സഹിക്കാതായി.

"എനിക്കു സ്വന്തം ചിലവിന്ന് കുറച്ചു പണം വേണം" "എന്ത്ര് ആ അനക്കു സ്വന്തം ——— ?"

കടലാസ്സ്, പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ—അങ്ങനെ പല ആവശ്യങ്ങളു അവൾ പറഞ്ഞു പതിനഞ്ചുറുപ്പിക ഭർത്താവിനോടു വാങ്ങി. താൻ പ്രവൃത്തിയെടുത്തു കിട്ടിയ ശമ്പളം മററൊരാളുടെ —തന്റെ ഭർത്താവാണെങ്കിലും—സമ്മതത്തോടുകൂടിയെ ചിലവഴിച്ചുകൂടുവെന്നു വന്നാൽ . . . അവളുടെ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യത്തെ ക്ഷതപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതായിരുന്നു ആ കാര്യം. അവൾ സ്വപ്നേപി വിചാരിക്കാത്തതാണ് സംഭവിച്ചത്. ഈ വെറും വിട്ടൊന്നം അവളിൽ തെല്ല് വെറുപ്പുളവാക്കുവാൻ കാരണമായി. ഒന്നുമില്ലാത്തവനാണ് കുഞ്ഞാലവിയെങ്കിൽ അവൾ ശഠിക്കുമാരുന്നില്ല.

ആയിഷ മേടിച്ച പതിനഞ്ചുറുപ്പിക ആരുമറിയാതെ പെററുമ്മയെ ഏല്പിച്ചു.

സന്തോഷാശ്രു പൊഴിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ആ മാതാവ് അതു വാങ്ങി.

ആയിഷ ഗദ്ഗദാക്ഷരങ്ങളിൽ പറഞ്ഞു "ഉമ്മാ ഇനി തരാൻ കൂടില്ല"

അവർ അവളുടെ മുഖത്തേക്കു നോക്കി.

"ഓല്ക്ക് ഇത് ഇഷ്ടമല്ല" അവൾ വ്യക്തമാക്കി

ദിനങ്ങൾ ശീഘ്രതയിൽ ഓടിക്കൊണ്ടിരുന്നു. നാഴി നെല്ല് മുററത്ത് വിതറിയാൽ നാനാഴി മലരാക്കി മാററുന്ന കടുത്ത വേനല്ക്കാലം ഇടവപ്പാതിക്കു വഴിമാറിക്കൊടുത്തു. കുഞ്ഞാലവി കൃഷിപ്പണിക്കുള്ള ഏർപ്പാടുകൾ തുടങ്ങി. ഏതാനും കൃഷി പാട്ടക്കാരുടെ കൈവശത്തിൽ തന്നെയാണ്. ഇപ്പോൾ താമസം ദൂരെയായതുകൊണ്ട് ഒരു ഗുണവും മററു പല ദോഷങ്ങളുമാണ്. ആയിഷ ടൌണിലാണ്. പക്ഷെ കൃഷി ടൌണിൽനിന്ന് എത്രയൊ അകന്നും. ഒന്നു നടന്നു നോക്കിപ്പോരുവാൻ അര ദിവസം ചിലവഴിക്കണം.

ഒരു ദിവസം കുഞ്ഞാലവി വെറുതെ ചോദിച്ചതാണ്.

"അന്റെ സ്കൂളില് ആരൊക്കെയാ മാഷ്ന്മാര് ?"

"ഉക്കണ്ണി നായർ, ഉണ്ണാമ മേനോൻ, ബാപ്പുട്ടി, അലവി, പിന്നെ ഞാനും" അവൾ പറഞ്ഞു.

"ഓല്ടെ കട്ട്യേള് പഠിച്ച്ണ്ല്ല്യെ ?

"ഉണ്ട്. ബാപ്പുട്ടിമാത്രം പെണ്ണു കെട്ടാത്തോന"

"ഹെന്നാല്—"കുഞ്ഞാലവിയുടെ മുഖം ആകപ്പാടെ മാറിപ്പോയി. "സൂക്ഷിച്ചണം"

പെണ്ണുകെട്ടാത്തവരൊക്കെ കുഞ്ഞാലവിയുടെ അഭിപ്രായത്തിൽ ബെല്ലും ബ്രേക്കുമില്ലാതെ ജീവിതം നയിക്കുന്നവരാണ്. കള്ളനല്ലെ കളവറിയൂ ? തന്റെ ജീവിതംതന്നെ ആയാൾക്ക് ആ വാദം തെളിയിക്കുവാൻ ഉദാഹരിക്കാം.

"എന്ത് ?" ആയിഷ ചോദിച്ചു.

"ബാപ്പുട്ടി തെറിച്ച ബിത്താ ?" കുഞ്ഞാലവി ചോദിച്ചു.

"ഒതുങ്ങിയ സ്വഭാവം" അവൾ തനിക്കു തോന്നിയ അഭിപ്രായം പറഞ്ഞു.

"ഇച്ച് അന്നെ ഓൻ ഒള്ള സ്കൂളില് പറഞ്ഞയക്കാൻ ഇഷ്ടം പോരാ"

"ഇത്തിരി മിണ്ടാണ്ടിരിക്കണം. തന്റേടം ഉണ്ടെച്ചാല് എവിടേം ആരുടെകൂടെം പണി എടുക്കാം" അവൾ തന്റെ നില വ്യക്തമാക്കി.

"ച്ച് ബിസ്വാസം പോരാ. പക്കെങ്കില് പെണ്ണ് ബല്ലാത്തോളാ" കുഞ്ഞാലവി ഭാര്യയുടെ മുഖത്തേക്ക് ഒളിഞ്ഞുനോക്കി.

അവൾ ഒന്നും സമാധാനം പറഞ്ഞില്ല.

ബാപ്പൂട്ടിയെപ്പററി ആയിഷ പറഞ്ഞിട്ടാണ് കുഞ്ഞാലവി അറിയുന്നത്. അദ്ധ്യാപകന്മാർ സ്കൂളിലേക്കു ഇറങ്ങിപ്പോകുന്നതും കയറിപ്പോരുന്നതും ആയാൾ കാണാറുണ്ട്. അതിൽ വിവാഹപ്രായമെത്താത്ത ആരുംതന്നെ ഇല്ലെന്നാണ് ആയാൾ വിശ്വസിച്ചതു്. ബാപ്പൂട്ടിയെ വ്യക്തിപരമായി അറിയില്ലെങ്കിലും ആ കൂട്ടത്തിൽ അത്ര ചെറിയ കുട്ടി ആരുമില്ലെന്നു ആയാൾക്കുറപ്പുണ്ട്. എന്നിട്ടും ഇപ്പോൾ കേട്ടതെന്താണ്? അപ്പോൾ ആ അവിവാഹിതനെപ്പററി കുഞ്ഞാലവിക്കു വെറുപ്പു തോന്നി. ആയാൾ ഒരു റൌഡിയായിരിക്കണം. തൻെറ ഭാര്യ ആയാളുടെ കൂടെയാണ് വളരെ സമയം കഴിച്ചുകൂട്ടേണ്ടതു്. പെണ്ണുങ്ങൾ കല്യാണം കഴിച്ചാലും ഇല്ലെങ്കിലും ഒരുവനിൽനിന്നു മറെറാരുവനിലേക്കു ചാടുന്ന മനസ്സും പേറിക്കൊണ്ടു നടക്കുന്നവരാണെന്നു ആയാൾക്കു പണ്ടേ അഭിപ്രായമുണ്ടു്. ആ അഭിപ്രായം പരിചയത്തിൻെറ സിമിൻറിൽ ഉറപ്പിച്ചിരിക്കുകയാണ്.

കുഞ്ഞാലവി ഒരു നവീനമായ നിലപാടിലേക്കു നീങ്ങി. പാടത്തു പണിക്കു കൂലിക്കാരെ ഏല്പിച്ചു ആയാൾ തൻെറ സാന്നിദ്ധ്യംകൊണ്ടു സ്കൂൾ പരിസരത്തെ അലങ്കരിക്കുകയെന്നതു് ഒരു പതിവാക്കി. ആയിഷ തൻെറ ദൃഷ്ടിയിൽനിന്നു അകന്നുപോകരുതു്. ബാപ്പൂട്ടിക്കു് അവളിൽ യാതൊരുവിധ സ്വാധീനവും ചെലുത്തുവാൻ പരിതഃസ്ഥിതി സൃഷ്ടിക്കാതിരിക്കേണ്ടതു് തൻെറ കടമയല്ലേ? എപ്പോഴും തന്നെ കണ്ടുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നാൽ ബാപ്പൂട്ടിക്കു അക്കാര്യത്തിൽ ശങ്കയുണ്ടാവും. ആയിഷക്കു പേടിയും. അത്രത്തോളം ആലോചിക്കാനേ കുഞ്ഞാലവിയുടെ സങ്കുചിത ബുദ്ധിക്കു് സാധിച്ചുള്ളു. താൻ മററുള്ളവരുടെ ദൃഷ്ടിയിൽ എത്രത്തോളം തുച്ഛനായിപ്പോകുന്നുവെന്നോ, മജ്ജയും രക്തവും മാംസവും കൊണ്ടുതന്നെ സൃഷ്ടിക്കപ്പെട്ട ആയിഷയും മനുഷ്യജീവിയായതുകൊണ്ടു് അവൾക്കും അല്പം ചില സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യങ്ങൾ അനുവദിക്കേണ്ടതാണെന്നോ പുരുഷൻ എന്നഭിമാനിക്കുന്ന ആയാൾ ഓർത്തില്ല. ആയാൾക്കു പററിയ ആകെയുള്ള വിഡ്ഢിത്തമതാണ്. അതിൽ ആയാൾ കുററക്കാരനല്ല. സ്ത്രീകൾ എന്തെങ്കിലും പ്രവൃത്തിയെടുത്തു ജീവിക്കുകയെന്നതു് പുത്തരിയല്ലെ? അങ്ങനെ കെട്ടിപ്പൂട്ടപ്പിച്ചു അന്തഃപുരത്തിൽ ഇരുത്താനെ ഇന്നും ആളുകൾ തയ്യാറുള്ളവെങ്കിലൊ! ജനസംഖ്യയുടെ പകുതിയോളം ഭാഗം അന്തഃപുരത്തിലിരുന്നാൽ പ്രവൃത്തിക്കുവാനാർ?

"എന്തെ ഭേദം?" ചിലപ്പോൾ അദ്ധ്യാപകന്മാരിലാരെങ്കിലും ചോദിക്കും.

"ഒന്നു് കാണാൻ തന്നെ"

ചിലപ്പോൾ ഇങ്ങനെയും പറഞ്ഞെന്നുവരും: "ഞമ്മടെ പെണ്ണുങ്ങളോടു് ഒന്നു പറ്യാൻ"

"ഒന്നു് ഇബ്ടെ ബാവേ——" മററദ്ധ്യാപകന്മാർ കാണെ കുഞ്ഞാലവി ആയിഷയെ വിളിക്കും. അതിൽ സാരവത്തായ ചില ഉദ്ദേശങ്ങളുണ്ട്. അവൾ തനിക്കു് അത്രമാത്രം അടങ്ങിയവളാണെന്നു കാണിക്കലാണൊന്നു്. തൻെറ വൈരൂപ്യപൂർണ്ണമായ ഭാവങ്ങൾ കണ്ടിട്ടു് പെണ്ണു കെട്ടാത്ത ബാപ്പൂട്ടി മനസ്സിലാക്കണം; താൻ വല്ലാത്തവനാണെന്നു്. എന്നാലല്ലെ അടുക്കുവാൻ പേടിയുണ്ടാവൂ? പാവം!

ഒരു ദിവസം കുഞ്ഞാലവി ഭാര്യയോടു ചോദിക്കുകയാണ്: "ജ്ജ് എന്ത്ര്ത്ത്നേ ആ മേസേടെ അട്ത്ത് പോയേ?"

"ഒപ്പിടാൻ"

"പൊസ്തകം അൻെറ അടുത്തേക്കു ബരത്തില്ലേ?"

"അതോണ്ടെന്താ?"

"അൻെറ കിണ്ക്കം പന്ത്യാവ്ണില്ല"

"നിങ്ങൾക്കു് മൊരച്ച പിരാന്താ"

"ജ്ജ് എന്തെ ഓൻെറ കയ്യീന്ന് മേടിച്ച്? അബ്ടെ ബെച്ചോളാൻ പറഞ്ഞൂടെ?"

"അതൊരു കടലാസ്സായിരുന്നു"

"അബ്ടെ ബെച്ചിട്ടു് എട്ത്താല് പോരേർക്കോ?"

"അയ്യോ! കയ്യിൽനിന്നു മേടിച്ചുപോയാൽ കടിക്ക്വോ?" ആയിഷ ചൊടിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു പറഞ്ഞു.

"ജ്ജ് മേടിച്ചതു് എയ്ത്താ. ജ്ജ് എന്ത്ര്ത്ത്നേ ചിരിച്ചേർന്നു"

ആയിഷ കുറച്ചു ഗൌരവത്തിൽ തന്നെയാണ് സമാധാനം പറഞ്ഞതു്: "ഒരു കാര്യം. നിങ്ങൾ ദയവു ചെയ്തു് സ്കൂളിൽ വരരുതു്. എൻെറ ഭർത്താവു് നിങ്ങളാണെന്ന ബോധത്തോടെയും, വിശ്വസ്തത പാലിക്കണമെന്ന പരിപൂർണ്ണ വിചാരത്തോടെയുമേ ഞാൻ ആരോടും എവിടെയും പെരുമാറിയിട്ടുള്ളു, പെരുമാറുന്നുള്ളു, പെരുമാറുവാൻ ഭാവവുമുള്ളു. ഇതു് ഹള്ളാവിൻെറ പേരിൽ എനിക്കു സത്യം ചെയ്യുവാൻ സാധിക്കും."

"പോടീ അൻെറ സത്യം!"

ആയിഷയുടെ കണ്ണിൽ വെള്ളം നിറഞ്ഞു. തൻെറ നിഷ്കളങ്കത തെളിയിക്കുവാൻ മറെറന്താണ് വഴി? കരിങ്കല്ലുപോലെ കട്ടപ്പമുള്ള കുഞ്ഞാലവിയുടെ ഹൃദയം അതുകൊണ്ടു ഉരുകുമോ?

പിറേറന്നു് കുഞ്ഞാലവി ആയിഷയെ അനുഗമിക്കുവാൻ പുറപ്പെട്ടപ്പോൾ അവൾ പറഞ്ഞു: "ങള് പോരണ്ട"

"ഹെന്നാലല്ലെ അനക്കു് ഓനായിററ് കിണ്ങ്ങാൻ കൂട്ടു."

"അതു് പടച്ചോനെ വിചാരിച്ചു പറയാതിരിക്കണം"

"പോടി ച്ചു് ഓനായിട്ടു് യണ്ടു് ബിസേയം പറേണം."

"ദയവു് ചെയ്യു്——"

അന്നു് അവൾ ക്ഷമിച്ചു. എന്തു ചെയ്യാനാണു്? ആയാൾ പത്തു മണി മുതൽ നാലു മണി വരെ സ്കൂളിൽ ചുററിപ്പററിക്കൂടി. ആയിഷയുടെ ഓരോ ചെയ്തികളും ആയാൾ സസൂക്ഷ്മം നിരീക്ഷിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നു.

കുഞ്ഞലവിക്കും ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടു് തോന്നി. പല പ്രവൃത്തികളും നിർവ്വഹിക്കാനുണ്ടു്. കൂലിക്കാരെ ഏല്പിച്ചതുകൊണ്ടു് കൃഷിപ്പണി ശരിയാവാതായി. ആയിഷയെ തനിയെ വിടുവാനും മനസ്സുവരുന്നില്ല.

"ഇജ്ജു് ഇസ്കോളില് പോണ്ട" ആയാൾ പറഞ്ഞു.

"അതു പററില്ല"

"അനക്കും, ച്ചും കഴ്ജാനുള്ള ബക ഞമ്മക്കു് കിട്ടാണു്" വളരെ ആലോചിച്ചശേഷം ആയാളുടെ തീർപ്പാണതു്.

"ഞാൻ പ്രവൃത്തി കളഞ്ഞുകളിക്കുവാൻ തയ്യാറില്ല" അവൾക്കു ഭർത്താവിൽ ഒരു വിശ്വാസം പോരായ്മയുണ്ടെന്നു ആ മുഖം വ്യക്തമാക്കിയിരുന്നു.

"ഹമ്ക്കെ അന്നെ ഞാം കാലും കയ്യും ഒടിച്ചിടും" അവൾ ഒന്നും മിണ്ടിയില്ല.

രാത്രി മുഴുവൻ അവൾ തേങ്ങിത്തേങ്ങി കരഞ്ഞിരുന്നു. തന്റെ യോഗംപോലെ വരുമെന്നവൾ സമാധാനിച്ചു. എന്നാലും അവൾ പ്രവൃത്തി കളയുവാൻ തയ്യാറില്ല.

പിറേറന്നു് അവൾ സാധാരണപോലെ സ്കൂളിലേക്കു് പുറപ്പെട്ടു. മുററത്തിറങ്ങിയപ്പോഴേക്കും കുഞ്ഞലവി ഓടിച്ചെന്നു അവളുടെ കൈ കടന്നുപിടിച്ചു: "അവൃത്തു് പോ"

"വിടിൻന്നും, ഞാൻ സ്കൂളിൽ പോകട്ടെ"

"പോകണ്ടാന്നു്"

"പററില്ല" അവൾ കരയുന്നുണ്ടായിരുന്നെങ്കിലും ആ അക്ഷരങ്ങൾക്കു് ദൃഢതയുണ്ടായിരുന്നു.

"പോ അവൃത്തു്." പിന്നേയും കല്പന.

"കുട്ട്യോളെപ്പോലെ കളിക്കൊല്ലു. പുരുഷനായാൽ——"

"എന്തെ? മുയുമനാക്കു്. അനക്കു് പുടിച്ചില്ലേ?"

ആയാൾ ആയിഷയെ വലിച്ചു കോലായിൽ കയററി.

"വിടിൻ" അവൾ ഒരു പെൺസിംഹമായി ചമഞ്ഞു. ആ മുഖഭാവം അന്നുവരെ കുഞ്ഞലവി കാണാത്തതാണു്.

൦ . . . ൦ . . . ആയിഷയുടെ പൂങ്കവിളുകളും കുഞ്ഞലവിയുടെ പരുത്ത കൈപ്പടവും തമ്മിൽ സംഘട്ടനം നടന്നു.

അവൾ കണ്ണുനീരൊലിപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു് ഇറങ്ങി നടന്നു. പിന്നേയും വലിച്ചു കോലായിൽ കയററുവാൻ കുഞ്ഞലവിക്കു് ധൈര്യം പോരായിരുന്നു.

വൈകുന്നേരം സ്കൂൾ വിട്ടു് ആയിഷ പോയതു് ഉമ്മാന്റെ കുടിയിലേക്കാണു്.

"ഓളു് ഒളുങ്ങാത്തോളാ" ആയിഷയെ തീക്കാനുണ്ടായ കാരണത്തെപ്പററി ആരെങ്കിലും ചോദിച്ചാൽ കുഞ്ഞലവി അങ്ങനെയാണു് പറയാറു്.



ಸೌಭಾಗ್ಯಂ

ಸ್ತ್ರೀಯರ ಶ್ರೇಯೋಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಶಾಖೆ

ಸಂಪುಟ IX | ಸೆಪ್ಟೆಂಬರ್ 1953 | ಸಂಚಿಕೆ 9

ರಾಗಸಾಗರ

ಎಂ. ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಿ.

ಹಿಂದೆ ಆರೋಗ್ಯಾರ್ಣವ ಎಂಬ ದೇಶ ವೊಂದಿತ್ತು. ಮೂಲಿಕಾಪುರ ವೆಂಬುದು ಅದರ ರಾಜಧಾನಿ. ರಾಜನ ಹೆಸರು ಸುಖಧರ. ಸುಖಧರ ಮಹಾರಾಜನು ಒಂದು ದಿವ್ಯಾದರ್ಶವನ್ನಿಟ್ಟುಕೊಂಡು ರಾಜ್ಯವಾಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದನು. ಅದೇನೆಂದರೆ ತನ್ನ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ರೋಗಿಗಳೇ ಇಲ್ಲದಂತೆ ಮಾಡಬೇಕೆಂಬುದು. ಅದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಆತನು ತನ್ನ ಆಸ್ಥಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ನೂರಾರು ಮಂದಿ ವೈದ್ಯರುಗಳನ್ನು ನಿಯಮಿಸಿದ್ದನು. ಅವರು ಯಾವಾಗಲೂ ಪ್ರಜೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪರೀಕ್ಷಿಸುತ್ತಾ, ಯಾರಿಗೂ ಒಂದು ತಲೆನೋವು, ನೆಗಡಿ ಕೂಡಾ ಬಾರದಂತೆ ನೋಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ಎಂಥ ಕಾಯಿಲೆ ಕೊಂಚಮಾತ್ರ ತಲೆದೋರಿದರೂ ಅವರು ಕೂಡಲೇ ವೈದ್ಯರ ಬಳಿಗೆ ಬರಲೇಬೇಕೆಂಬುದು ರಾಜನ ಕಠಿನ ಶಾಸನವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಯಾವ ಹೊಸಬನು ಬಂದರೂ ರಾಜನು ಕೇಳುವ ಮೊದಲನೆ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆ: "ನಿನಗೇನು ರೋಗ?" ಎಂಬುದೇ. ಆದುದರಿಂದ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಅನೇಕವಾಗಿ ಯಾವ ರೋಗರುಜನೆಗಳೂ ಇರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಪ್ರಜೆಗಳೆಲ್ಲಾ ಸುಖವಾಗಿದ್ದರು. ಆದುದರಿಂದ ಸುಖಧರನ ಕೀರ್ತಿ ದೂರ ದೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೂಡ ಹಬ್ಬುತ್ತಿತ್ತು.

ಒಂದು ದಿನ ಒಬ್ಬ ಹೊಸ ಮನುಷ್ಯ ರಾಜನ ಆಸ್ಥಾನಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದ. ಅವನು ಒಳ್ಳೇ ಭರ್ಜರಿಯ ಧೋತರ ಉಟ್ಟಿದ್ದ; ಜರದ ಶಾಲುವೆ ಹೊತ್ತಿದ್ದ; ಪಟ್ಟೆಯ ಮುಂಡಾಸು ಧರಿಸಿ ನೋಡಲು ಒಬ್ಬ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸನಂತೆ ಕಾಣುತ್ತಿದ್ದ. ಅವನ ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ವೀಣೆಯಿತ್ತು. ಆ ವೀಣೆಯೆಂಬ ವಸ್ತುವನ್ನು ಆ ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲೇ ಯಾರೂ ಅರಿಯರು. ಅವನು ರಾಜದರ್ಶನವನ್ನು ಅಪೇಕ್ಷಿಸಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಭಟರು ಅವನನ್ನು ಅಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಕರೆತಂದಿದ್ದರು.

ರಾಜನಿಗೂ ಆಸ್ಥಾನದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದ ಎಲ್ಲರಿಗೂ ಅವನೊಬ್ಬ ವಿಚಿತ್ರ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯಾಗಿ ಕಂಡನು. ದೊಡ್ಡ ದೊಡ್ಡ ವೈದ್ಯರು ಅವನನ್ನು ತದೇಕ ದೃಷ್ಟಿಯಿಂದ ನೋಡುತ್ತಾ, ಇವನಿಗೇನು ವ್ಯಾಧಿಯಿರಬಹುದು? ಎಂದು ಯೋಚನೆ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ರಾಜನು ವಾಡಿಕೆಯಂತೆ— "ನಿನಗೇನು ರೋಗ?" ಎಂದು ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆ ಮಾಡಿದ.

ಆತನು ಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ವೈದ್ಯರುಗಳನ್ನು ಸಂದೇಹದಿಂದ ನೋಡುತ್ತ "ಅದೇನಿಲ್ಲ ಮಹಾಪ್ರಭು; ನಿಮ್ಮ ಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಗೀತ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸರಿದ್ದಾರೆಯೆ?" ಎಂದು ಕೇಳಿದ.

"ಅದೇನಿಲ್ಲವೆಂದು ಶಂಕಿಸಬೇಡವಯ್ಯ. ಏನಿದ್ದರೂ ನಿಶ್ಶಂಕೆಯಿಂದ ಹೇಳು. ನನ್ನ ಕೀರ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ನೀನು ಕೇಳಿದ್ದಿ ತಾನೆ?"

"ಕೇಳಿದ್ದೇನೆ ಪ್ರಭು; ಕೇಳಿಯೇ ಬಂದೆ. ತಮ್ಮ ಆಸ್ಥಾನದಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ನನಗೆ ವಿಜಯವಾಗುವುದೆಂದು ನಂಬಿಗೆಯಿಟ್ಟೇ ಬಂದಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ಆಲಿಸಬೇಕು ಪ್ರಭು" ಹೀಗೆಂದು ಆ ಮನುಷ್ಯ ಅಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಕುಳಿತು ತನ್ನ ವೀಣೆಯನ್ನು ಶ್ರುತಿಮಾಡ ತೊಡಗಿದ. ಶ್ರುತಿಗೆ ತನ್ನ ದನಿಯನ್ನು ಸೇರಿಸಿ ಆಲಾಪನೆ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದ. ನೋಡ ನೋಡುತ್ತಿರಲು ಸಭೆಯೇ ತನ್ಮಯವಾಗುವಂತೆ ಹಾಡ ಲಾರಂಭ ಮಾಡಿದ.

ಸಭೆಯಲ್ಲಿದ್ದವರೂ ವೈದ್ಯ ಪರಿವಾರವೂ ರಾಜನೂ ತಲೆಯಾಡಿಸ ಲಾರಂಭಿಸಿದರು. ರಾಜನು ವೈದ್ಯರ ಮುಖ ನೋಡಿದ. ವೈದ್ಯರು ಪರಸ್ಪರರ ಮುಖ ನೋಡಿಕೊಂಡು ಯೋಚನೆಗೆ ಬಿದ್ದರು. ಅವನ ಸಂಗೀತ ಅದ್ಭುತವಾಗಿ ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾಗ, ವೈದ್ಯರುಗಳ ತಲೆ ತನ್ನಂತಾನೇ ಆಡ ತೊಡಗಿತ್ತು. ರಾಜನು ಎಚ್ಚರ ತಂದುಕೊಂಡು ವೈದ್ಯ ಮುಖ್ಯನನ್ನು ತನ್ನ ಬಳಿಗೆ ಕರೆದು ಪಿಸುಮಾತಿನಿಂದ ಯೋಚನೆ ಕೇಳಿದ. ಅದಕ್ಕೆ ಆ ಪ್ರಚಂಡ ವೈದ್ಯನು— "ಪ್ರಭೂ, ಇದೊಂದು ಹೊಸ ರೋಗ. ನರ ಸಂಬಂಧವಾದುದು. ಅಂಟುವ್ಯಾಧಿ ಕೂಡಾ. ಅದು ನಮ್ಮ ಮನಸ್ಸಿನ ನರಕ್ಕೂ ಹೊಡೆಯುವುದರಿಂದಲೇ ನಮ್ಮ ತಲೆಯೂ ಆಡುತ್ತದೆ. ಅದರ ವೇದನೆಯ ತಾತ್ಕಾಲಿಕ ಪರಿಹಾರಕ್ಕಾಗಿಯೇ ಅವನು ಆ ವಿಚಿತ್ರ ಶಬ್ದಮಾಡುವ ವಸ್ತುವನ್ನು ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿಟ್ಟುಕೊಂಡಿದ್ದಾನೆ. ಇವನನ್ನು ಬಹಳ ಜಾಗರೂಕತೆಯಿಂದ ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸಿ ವೈದ್ಯ ಮಾಡಬೇಕಾಗಿದೆ. ಇಲ್ಲದಿದ್ದರೆ ಈ ವಿಚಿತ್ರವ್ಯಾಧಿ ಊರೆಲ್ಲಾ ಹರಡಲಿಕ್ಕೂ ಸಾಕು" ಎಂದು ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯ ತಿಳಿಸಿದನು. "ಹಾಗಾದರೆ ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಯೋಗ್ಯ ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆಮಾಡಿ ಗುಣಪಡಿಸಿರಿ. ಇಂತಹ ಹೊಸ ವ್ಯಾಧಿಯನ್ನು ಗುಣಪಡಿಸಿದರಲ್ಲವೇ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಮತ್ತು ನನ್ನ ಕೀರ್ತಿ ಬೆಳಗುತ್ತದೆ?" ಎಂದು ಆಜ್ಞಾಪಿಸಿ ರಾಜನು ಎದ್ದು ಒಳಕ್ಕೆ ಹೋದನು— ತನಗೆಲ್ಲಿ ಆ ರೋಗ ಅಂಟಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದೋ ಎಂಬ ಭಯದಿಂದ.

ಕೂಡಲೇ ಆ ವೈದ್ಯರೆಲ್ಲಾ ಆ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸನನ್ನು ಮುತ್ತಿಕೊಂಡರು. ಭಯಂಕರವಾದೊಂದು ಆಯುಧವನ್ನು ಮುಟ್ಟುವಂತೆ ಅವನ ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿದ್ದ ಅದ್ಭುತವಾದ ಆ ವೀಣೆಯನ್ನು ಕಿತ್ತು, ಅದನ್ನು ಪರಿಶೋಧನಾಲಯಕ್ಕೆ ಕಳಿಸಿದರು. ಆಗ ಆ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸನೇನೋ ಹೇಳುವುದಕ್ಕಿದ್ದ. "ಮಾತಾಡಬೇಡ. ಉಸಿರಿಗೆ ಆಪತ್ತು. ಎದೆ ಹಾರೀತು. ಮೊದಲು ಚಿಕಿತ್ಸೆ ನಡೆಸಿ ನಿನ್ನನ್ನು ಗುಣಪಡಿಸುತ್ತೇವೆ. ನಂತರ ನೀನು ಮಾಮೂಲು ಮನುಷ್ಯನಾಗುತ್ತಿ" ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾ ಅವನನ್ನು ಮಲಗಿಸಿ, ಅಲ್ಲಿ ಒತ್ತಿ ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿಡಿದು, ಅತ್ತ ಎಳೆದು, ಇತ್ತ ತಿವಿದು, ತಟ್ಟಿ, ಬೊಟ್ಟಿ, ಕುಟ್ಟಿ ಪರೀಕ್ಷೆ ಮಾಡಿದರು. ಬಳಿಕ ಒಂದು ಇತ್ಯರ್ಥಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದು ನಾಭಿಯ ಬುಡಕ್ಕೆ ಕಾಯಿಸಿಡಬೇಕೆಂದು ತೀರ್ಮಾನ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡರು.

ಓಡಿಹೋಗಲು ತುಳ್ಳಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಆ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸನನ್ನು ಗಟ್ಟಿಯಾಗಿ ಒತ್ತಿಹಿಡಿದರು. ಕಬ್ಬಿಣದ ಸಲಾಕಿಯನ್ನು ಕೆಂಪಗೆ ಕಾಯಿಸಿ ತಂದು ಅವನ ಹೊಕ್ಕಳಿನ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಕಾಯಿಸಿಯೇ ಬಿಟ್ಟರು. ನಂತರ ಆ ಹುಣ್ಣಿಗೆ ಔಷಧ ವಿಟ್ಟು ಕಟ್ಟುಕಟ್ಟಿ, "ಈಗ ಹೇಗಿದೆ? ಈಗ ಆ ತಂತಿಯ ಹೊರೆಯನ್ನು ಕೈಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿಡಿದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕೆಂದು ಕಾಣುತ್ತದೆಯೆ? ಆ ಬಗೆಯ ವಿಕಾರ ಶಬ್ದಗಳು ಬಾಯಿಂದ ಹೊರಡುತ್ತವೆಯೆ?" ಎಂದು ಕೇಳಿದರು.

"ಇಲ್ಲ! ಇಲ್ಲ! ಏನೂ ಇಲ್ಲ! ನನ್ನ ಬಿಡಿ! ಹೋಗುತ್ತೇನೆ. ಬುದ್ಧಿ ಕೆಟ್ಟು ಇಲ್ಲಿಗೆ ಬಂದೆ!" ಎಂದು ಕೂಗಿದನು ಆ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸ.

ಆ ವೈದ್ಯರು ಕಟ್ಟಿದ ಮೂಲಿಕೆ ಎಂತಹುದೋ? ಮರುದಿನವೇ ಆತನ ಕಾಯಿಸಿಟ್ಟ ಹುಣ್ಣು ಒಣಗುತ್ತಾ ಬಂತು. ಆತನು ಬದುಕಿದೆಯಾ ಬಡ ಜೀವವೆ!" ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾ ಹೊರಟು ಹೋದನು

ಪಾಪ, ಅವನಿಗೆ ತನ್ನ ಮನೆಗೆ ಹೋಗಲಿಕ್ಕೆ ಬಹಳ ಅವಮಾನವಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಅವನ ರಾಜ್ಯವು ಬಹಳ ದೂರದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಭೂತಾಲೀ ನಗರ. ಅಲ್ಲಿ ಅವನೊಬ್ಬ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಸಂಗೀತ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸ. ರಾಗಸಾಗರನೆಂದು ಸಾರ್ಥಕನಾಮ

ಅವನಿಗೆ. ಅವನು ಅಷ್ಟು ದೊಡ್ಡ ಸಂಗೀತ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸನಾಗಿದ್ದರೂ, ತನ್ನ ವಿದ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ಪ್ರದರ್ಶನಮಾಡಿ ಧನ ಸಂಪಾದನೆ ಮಾಡುವ ಗೊಡವೆಗೆ ಹೋಗಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಹಾಗೆ ಮಾಡಿದರೆ ತನಗೆ ಸೋಲು ಬರುವುದೆಂದು ಅವನಿಗೊಂದು ಅಂಜಿಕೆ. ತನಗಿಂತ ದೊಡ್ಡ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸರು ಸ್ಪರ್ಧೆಗೆ ನಿಲ್ಲುವ ಅವಕಾಶವಾದೀತು; ಆಗ ತನ್ನ ಅಂತಸ್ತು ಕಡಮೆಯಾದೀತು ಎಂದು ಸುಮ್ಮನೆಯೇ ಇದ್ದನು. ಅದರ ಫಲವಾಗಿ ಮನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಿತ್ಯ ಬಡತನವೇ ಗತಿಯಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಹೆಂಡತಿ ಅವನನ್ನು ಆಗಾಗ ನಿಂದಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಳು—ಎಲ್ಲಿಗಾದರೂ ಹೋಗಿ ಗಾನ ಪ್ರದರ್ಶನಮಾಡಿ ಬಹುಮಾನ ಪಡೆದುಕೊಂಡು ಬರಬಾರದೇ ಎಂದು. ಬಹುಮಾನದ ಬದಲಿಗೆ ಅವಮಾನವಾದರೆ......?

ಆಗ ಆರೋಗ್ಯಾರ್ಣವ ದೇಶಾಧಿಪನಾದ ಸುಖಧರ ರಾಜನು ಬಹಳ ಒಳ್ಳೆಯ ರಾಜನೆಂಬ ಹೆಸರು ಅವನ ಕಿವಿಯನ್ನು ಸೇರಿತು. ಆ ದೇಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಗೀತ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸರೇ ಇಲ್ಲವೆಂಬ ಒಳ್ಳೆಯ ಸುದ್ದಿಯನ್ನೂ ಕೇಳಿದನು. ಅಂತಹ ಸಂಗೀತದ ಸುಖವನ್ನೇ ಅರಿಯದ ರಾಜನಿಗೆ ಸಂಗೀತ ಸುಖವನ್ನು ನೀಡಿದರೆ ತನಗೆ ಒಳ್ಳೆಯ ಗೌರವವೂ ಹೇರಳ ಧನಲಾಭವೂ ಆದೀತೆಂದು ನಂಬಿದ. ಧನ ಸಂಪಾದನೆ ಮಾಡದೆ ಮನೆಗೆ ಕಾಲಿಡಲಾರೆನೆಂದು ಹೆಂಡತಿಯಮುಂದೆ ಪಂಥಕಟ್ಟಿ ಹೊರಟಿದ್ದ. ಫಲ ಹೀಗಾಯಿತು.

ಧನವಂತೂ ಹಾಗಿರಲಿ, ವೀಣೆಯನ್ನು ಕೂಡಾ ಹೋಗಲಾಡಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಬರಿಗೈಯಿಂದ ಮನೆಗೆ ಹೋಗಿ, ಹೆಂಡತಿಯ ಅವಹೇಳನಕ್ಕೆ ಪಾತ್ರನಾಗುವುದಕ್ಕಿಂತಲೂ, ಕಾಡಿನಲ್ಲಿ ತಪಸ್ಸು ಮಾಡುವುದು ಒಳ್ಳೆಯದೆಂದು ಭಾವಿಸಿ ರಾಗಸಾಗರನು ಕಾಡಿಗೆ ಹೋದ.

ಹೆಸರೇ ರಾಗಸಾಗರ. ಮೇಲೆ ಒಳ್ಳೇ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸಮಾಡಿದ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸ. ಸುಮ್ಮನೆ ತಪಸ್ಸು ಹೇಗೆ ಮಾಡಿಯಾನು? ಅವನು ಹಣ್ಣು ಹಂಪಲುಗಳನ್ನು ಭುಜಿಸುತ್ತಾ, ತನಗೆ ತಾನೇ ಸುಶ್ರಾವ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಹಾಡುತ್ತ ಆ ಕಾಡಿನಲ್ಲಿದ್ದನು. ಬರೀ ಬಾಯಿಯಿಂದ ಹೊರಡುವ ಆತನ ಸಶಾಸ್ತ್ರೀಯ ಕಂಠನಾದಕ್ಕೆ ಕಾಡಿನಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಮೃಗಗಳೂ ಪಕ್ಷಿಗಳೂ ಸ್ತಬ್ಧವಾಗಿ ಕೇಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದವು. ಕ್ರೂರ ಮೃಗಗಳು ಕೂಡ ತಮ್ಮ ಕ್ರೂರ ಸ್ವಭಾವವನ್ನು ಮರೆತು ತನ್ಮಯವಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದುವು. ಇಹರ ಮೇಲೆ ಅವನು ಒಂದು ಬಿದಿರ ಕೊಳಲನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು, ತನ್ನ ಸಂಗೀತ ನಾದವನ್ನು ಇನ್ನಷ್ಟು ಇಂಪುಗೊಳಿಸಿದನು. ಅವನ ವೇಣುನಾದ ಸಂಗೀತ ಸುಧಾರಸವು ಆ ಅರಣ್ಯದಲ್ಲೆಲ್ಲಾ ಅಮರ ಸುಧಾರಸವನ್ನು ಹರಿಸಿಕೊಂಡಿತ್ತು.

ಆ ಕಾಡಿನ ಪ್ರಾಂತಕ್ಕೆ ಬೇಟೆಯಾಡಲು ಬಂದ ವಿದ್ಯಾಧರ ಮಹಾರಾಜನು ಈ ಸಂಗೀತ ಶ್ರವಣದಿಂದ ಆಕರ್ಷಿತನಾಗಿ ಅವನ ಬಳಿಗೆ ಬಂದನು. ಆಗ ರಾಗಸಾಗರನ ಕೊಳಲಿನಿಂದ ಮೇಘಮಲ್ಹಾರ ರಾಗವು ಹೊರಡುತ್ತಿರಲು, ಆಕಾಶವು ನಿಜವಾಗಿಯೂ ಮೇಘಾವೃತವಾಗುತಿತ್ತು. ಈ ಅದ್ಭುತ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ಕಂಡು ವಿದ್ಯಾಧರ ರಾಜನು ರಾಗಸಾಗರನಿಗೆ ನಮಸ್ಕಾರಮಾಡಿ, ಅವನು ಯಾರು ಏನು ಎಂಬುದನ್ನೆಲ್ಲಾ ವಿಚಾರಮಾಡಿದನು.

"ಸ್ವಾಮಿ, ತಮ್ಮಂತಹ ಅಪ್ರತಿಮ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸರು ಹೀಗೆ ಅರಣ್ಯಗಾಯಕರಾಗಿರಬಾರದು. ಕಲೆ - ಸಂಗೀತಗಳ ಗಂಧವೇ ಅರಿಯದ ಸುಖಧರ ನಂತಹ ಅರಸಿಕರಿಗೆ ತಮ್ಮ ಬೆಲೆ ಹೇಗೆ ಗೊತ್ತಾದೀತು? ಕಲೆಯ ಬೆಲೆ, ಕಲೆಯ ಮಹತ್ವ, ರಸಿಕರಾದ ಕಲಾಭಿಮಾನಿಗಳಿಗಷ್ಟೇ ಗೊತ್ತಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದು ತಿಳಿಯದೆ ಮೋಸಹೋದ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸರು ನೀವು. ಬನ್ನಿ. ನನ್ನ ಆಸ್ಥಾನ ಗಾಯಕರಾಗಿ ವಿರಾಜಿಸಿರಿ. ನಿಜವಾದ ಸತ್ವವುಳ್ಳ ನಿಮ್ಮಂತಹ ಕಲಾವಿದರು ಪ್ರತಿ ಸ್ಪರ್ಧಿಗಳನ್ನು ನೆನೆದು ಶಂಕಿಸುವುದುಂಟೆ? ಒಂದು ವೇಳೆ ನಿಮಗಿಂತ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಪ್ರತಿಭಾವಂತರಿದ್ದರೂ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಬೆಲೆ ಕಿಂಚಿತ್ತೂ ಕಡಮೆಯಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಅಮೃತವು ಬಿಂದಿಗೆ ತುಂಬಾ ಇದ್ದರೂ, ಚಿಕ್ಕ ತಟ್ಟೆಯಲ್ಲಿದ್ದರೂ ಅಮೃತ ಅಮೃತವೇ. ಬನ್ನಿ ಬನ್ನಿ!"

ಹೀಗೆ ವಿದ್ಯಾಧರರಾಜನು ರಾಗಸಾಗರನಿಗೆ ಜ್ಞಾನೋಪದೇಶ ಮಾಡಿದಂತೆ ಹೇಳಿ ಗೌರವದಿಂದ ಕರೆದೊಯ್ದನು. ನಂತರ ರಾಗಸಾಗರನು ವಿದ್ಯಾಧರ ಮಹಾರಾಜನ ಆಸ್ಥಾನ ಗಾಯಕನಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಹೆಂಡತಿಯನ್ನು ಸಹಾ ಕರೆಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಶ್ರೀಮಂತನಾಗಿ ಸುಖಜೀವನ ನಡೆಸಿದನು.

ಅಂಚೆಗಾರ

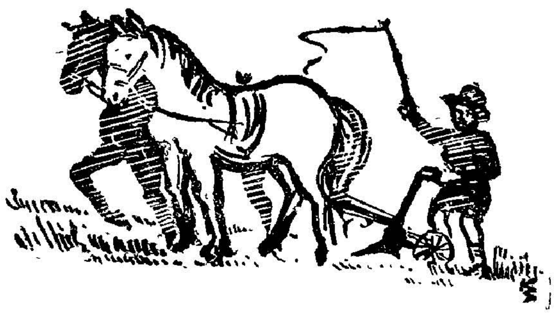
"ರಂಗ"

ಕೆಂಪು ಗೆರೆಯ ಹೊಳಪಿನ ತಲೆ ಪಾಗಿನ
ಖಾಕೀ ಭೂಷಣ ಭೂಷಿತನು.
ತೂಗಾಡಿಸಿ ಅಂಚೆಯ ಸಂಚಿಯನು
ನಡೆವನು ಕೇವಲ ನಿಸ್ಸಂಗಿ!

ಕೂಡಿಸುವನು ಪ್ರಣಯದ ಕೂಟವನು!
ಓಡಿಸುವನು ಪ್ರೇಮದ ವಾತವನು!
ಮಾಡಿಸುವನು ಮಂಗಳ ಕಾರ್ಯವನು.
ಆದರು ಕೇವಲ ನಿಸ್ಸಂಗಿ!

ಮುದ ದುಗುಡಂಗಳ ಕೆಡುಕೊಳ್ಳಿತುಗಳ
ಸಕಲ ಭಾವಗಳ ಸಂಚಯನು.
ಯಾವ ಭಾವನೆಗು ತಾನಿರದವನು,
ಆದರು ಜನತೆಗೆ ಬೇಕವನು.

ಜನರ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆಯ ಗುರಿಯವನು,
ಜಗ ವ್ಯವಹಾರ ಪ್ರವಾಹಕನು.
ಮಿತ ಭಾಷಿ, ನಿಯಮಿತ ವೇಷಿ, ನಿ
ರ್ದೋಷೀ ಕೇವಲ ನಿಸ್ಸಂಗಿ!



सौभाग्य

महिलाभ्युदय विभाग, मद्रास

वाल्यूम IX सितम्बर १९५३ नं० ९

वह कौन है ?

एल. बसवराज "प्रवीण"

सन् १८९२ जनवरी महीने का एक दिन था। अंधेरा गायब हुआ था। और पूरब दिशा में सूरज निकल रहा था। जागी हुई चिडियाँ अपने मीठे रागों से प्रशांत वायुमण्डल को सुशोभित कर रही थीं। ऐसे समय में कन्याकुमारी के एक पवित्र देवालय मे निरुद्धाविघ्न पुजारी लोग मंदिर को खोलकर अपने अपने कार्य में मग्न होगये। कुछ देर के बाद अपने कार्यों से छुट्टी पाकर मंदिर के बडे दरवाजे के पास खडे होकर देखने लगे। उस समय एक सन्यासी शांतगति से देवालय के अंदर घुस रहा था। वह भव्यमूर्ति किसी तरफ न मुडकर सीधे मंदिर के गर्भस्थान के पास पहुंचकर, देवी को दंडप्रणाम करके उठ खडा हुआ। देवी के सामने जलते हुए दीप की रोशनी में उस महान पुरुष के दिव्य तेजस को अवलोककर पुजारी लोग तथा उस पुण्यक्षेत्र में आये हुए यात्रीगण आश्चर्य में पडे। उन लोगों में किसी नें भी अपने जीवन में ऐसे तेजस्वी को कभी न देखा था। वे एक दूसरे से पूछने लगे : वह कौन है?

उसके दीर्घ देह, चौडी भुजाओ, विस्तार छाती तथा नानाप्रकार के व्यायाम से सुपुष्ट और बलिष्ठ कधों को देखकर उपस्थित लोगों में भय व विस्मय की भावना उत्पन्न हुई। भारी और दीर्घ होने पर भी उस वज्र शरीर में आलस्य तथा तामस गुणों की जगह न थी। उसके लाल, चौडे मुख और ललाट अद्भुत तेजोन्मय विशाल नेत्र, लोगों में पूज्यभाव को उत्पन्न कर रहे थे। उस दृष्टि में दृढता के साथ हास्य और विशाल भावों में गंभीर ज्ञान मिश्रित था। केसारिया वस्त्र पहने हुए, दंड धारक के ओजस्वी सुंदर गंभीर वदन से आत्माकांति प्रकाशित हो रही थी। अर्चकों की चकित नज़र से वह एक राजकुमार की भांति दीख पडा ध्यान दृढ बनकर माता के सामने खडे होकर, वह मानवकेसरी ध्यान के बाद मंदिर के समस्त भागों को देखने लगा। इसके प्रशांत तथा गंभीर हृदय में एक महोद्वेग की लहर उठ रही थी। देवालय से समुद्र की तरफ़ वह तेजी से चल रहा था। पुजारी लोग उसकी ओर ताकते रहे और मन ही मन उसको नमस्कार कर रहे थे। हिम के मध्य वह गायब हुआ। पुजारीगण एक दूसरे को देखकर विस्मय के साथ पूछने लगे : वह कौन है?

वह सन्यासी समुद्र किनारे आ पहुँचा। कन्याकुमारी का विशाल समुद्र का किनारा भारतमाता के पवित्र पावों का अंत। वेदभूमि अंतिम भागा सन्यासी ने भावपर्वश होकर चारो तरफ़ अपनी दृष्टि डाली। सामने विस्तार तथा अनंत समुद्र अलोल-कल्लोल महा तरंगें, रुद्र व रमणीय रूप धरकर शोभित हो रही थीं। पीछे वेदमाता की पवित्र भूमि भरत खंड भिन्न भिन्न जातियों के, भिन्न भिन्न भाषाओं के, भिन्न भिन्न रुचि के होने पर भी एक समान संस्कृति का पुराण-प्रसिद्ध भारत वर्ष। सूर्योदय के रंगीले प्रकाश में समुद्र में उठनेवाली तरंगे चमक रही थीं। किनारे के, नारियल के पेडों पर समुद्र चिडियां सुरीले रागों मे गा रही थीं। उस मधुर, शांत व सुंदर दृश्य में सन्यासी आवेशमय हुआ उस तपस्वी की कांति सूरज की कांति के समान थी। सन्यासी के मन में न मालूम कौनसी भावनाएँ उत्पन्न हुई होंगी? समुद्र में एक चट्टान दिखायी पडा। उस भयंकर समुद्र में खौफनाक समुद्री जानवरों से भरे उस गहरे पानी में कूद पडा

और धीरज के साथ वह तैरने लगा । किनारे पर बैठे हुए लोग उस दृढता को देखकर कांप उठे । चंद मिनिटों में सन्यासी उन लोगों की नज़र से विलीन हुआ । वे कुतूहल होकर आपस में पूछने लगे : वह कौन है ?

सन्यासी समुद्र के उस चट्टान पर बैठकर करोडों भावों के निरंतर नृत्य में भावावेश हुआ । दाहिनी ओर समुद्र, बाईं ओर समुद्र, पीछे समुद्र, सामने अपनी विशाल प्यारी जन्मभूमि ऊपर अनन्त नील आकाश । इन महा वस्तुओं के बीच वह चट्टान पर सिंह की भांति खडे होकर चारों ओर अपनी नज़र दौडायी । किशोर कमल मित्र ऊपर चढ रहा था । तरंगें हीरों की तरह उठ उठ कर गिर रही थीं और नील स्पटिक वर्ण की तरंगें उस राजयोगी के कमलपादों को आ आकर चूमने लगीं । सन्यासी की आंखें चमक उठीं । चेहरे पर आत्मा-प्रकाश चमक उठा नूतनभावों से हृदय प्रकाशमय हो उठा । विकंपित देह के साथ बैठकर, पद्मासन रूढ ध्यानमग्न हुआ । समुद्र में उठनेवाली तरंगों के साथ साथ उस राजयोगी के हृदय में भावतरंगें तीव्र वेग से उठ रही थीं । उस चट्टान पर बैठा हुआ वह देशभक्त, वीर सन्यासी मातृभूमि के भूत, भविष्य और वर्तमान के संबन्ध विचार करने लगा । एक घंटा हुआ । दो घंटे हुए । तीन घंटे बीत गये । चौथा घंटा आया ! सूरज ऊपर चढा । गरमी बढी । मगर वह न हिला । चिंता के बीच बीच में उसके मुंह से आह निकल पडी ज्योति उसके वदन पर तांडव कर रही थी मानो वह दूसरा महान गौतम हो । कभी वीरों की तरह, कभी बच्चों के जैसे समुद्र को निहारने लगा । कभी कन्याकुमारी और रामेश्वर से लेकर, बद्रिकाश्रम और कैलास तक पुण्यभूमि भारतवर्ष को विलोकने लगा । बीच बीच में हे जननी, हे भारतमाते, हे मातृभूमि, के शब्द जोरदार शब्दों से निकल पडे । कभी हर्ष, कभी दुःख, कभी सरलता, कभी गंभीरता, कभी गुस्सा, कभी शांति । फिर ध्यानमग्न । भारतभूमि के भूत, भविष्य तथा वर्तमान की हालत चल चित्र जैसे उसके मन में स्पष्टरूप से दिखायी देने लगी ।

भारतवर्ष के महा तत्व, महा व्यक्ति, महा राज्य, महा चक्रवर्ती, महा कवि, महा योगी, सब एक एक करके उसकी आँखों के सामने दिखायी देने लगा । ये सब उसके दिव्य दर्शन थे । मनु, व्यास, शंकराचार्य, बुद्ध, राम, कृष्ण, चैतन्य, बसवेश्वर, कर्णाटक, वंग, केरल,

राजपुत्रस्थान, महाराष्ट्र, ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रिय, वैश्य, शूद्र, हिन्दू, मुस्लिम, पारसिक, ईसाई, धर्म, अर्थ, काम, मोक्ष आदि एक के बाद एक उसके मन चित्र में आने लगा। सनातनधर्म का पुनरजीवन, आर्य संस्कृति का पुनरुत्तान, उस राजयोगी का ध्येय था। धर्म भारतियों की रक्त नाडियों में प्रवाह करते हुए देखकर, उसके मन में यह अचल विचार आया कि भारतवर्ष पुनरजीवित बनेगा। सनातन आर्य संस्कृति नूतन संस्कारों को पाकर उठ खडी होगी। हे जननी? तेरी जय हो। वह तेजस्वी उठ खडा हुआ जैसे उन्नत पर्वत के ऊपर उन्नत शिखर खडा होता है। मन में भावों की तरंगे भर गयीं। दिगदिगांत को, नीलाकाश को नील समुद्र को फिर भारतवर्ष को देखने लगा। सुमधुर, गंभीर वाणी से, समस्त विश्व को देखकर कहने लगा।

हे जननी, आर्यमाते, पुण्यभूमि, तेरे सुंदर वदन को जिसने कुरुप बनाया उसके पापों को क्षमा करो। अखंड भूमि में, भेद को उत्पन्न करके नाश हुए। धर्म को भूलकर भारतवासी गिरे। झूठी पद्धति को धर्म समझकर उसके अनुसार चलकर अपनी असली आस्तित्व व महिमाको खो बैठे। अनाथ बने। अम्मा त्रिलोक सुंदरी, तुझे कुरुप बनायी। पापों को क्षमा करो भूलो को सन्मति दो' तेरा ऐश्वर्य कहाँ? कहाँ तेरा आत्माधर्म? पुरोहितों की दुरात्मा से, जातिभेद की क्रूरता से, पंडितों के स्वार्थभाव से, पामरों की मूर्खता से तेरा सुंदर सुरमंदिर श्मशान बना। हे आँसू मुखाश्रुबिन्दु, माता के पावनपादों को साफ़ करो। जनों के गुनाहों को माफ़ करो। श्मशान बना हुआ भारतवर्ष को सुरमंदिर बनाओ।

हे सन्यासी हमने क्या किया? भारतमाता की गोद पर खेलनेवाले सन्यासी हमने क्या किया? काषायवस्त्र धारी होकर, मूर्ख जनों के अतिथि बनकर, उनका खाना खाकर घूमनेवाले लाखों सन्यासी हमने क्या किया? तत्वबोधन! छि! छि! बैरागी, तेरी तत्वशिक्षा को आग लगाओ। पागल! पागल!! भूखे लोगों के देश में तेरे तत्वदर्शन! कपट वृति! हम क्या कर रहे हैं? खाना नहीं, कपडा नहीं, घर नहीं। ऐसे लोगों को वेदान्तशिक्षा! आह! आह!! वेद माते तेरे सन्यासियों की

लीला को देखो। देखकर खेलो, खेलो। पावों पर पडी ज़मीन को न पानेवाले अशक्तों को अनन्त आकाश को दिखा रही हो। भाई, सन्यासी, हमें ऐसे सूखे तत्वों से मुक्ति न मिलेगी। खाना चाहिये, वस्त्र चाहिये, जन चाहिये, धन चाहिये।

मैं एक गरीब साधु क्या कर सकता हूँ। मुझे धन कहाँ से मिलेगा? सन्यासी सागरको देखने लगा। पश्चिम की तरफ़ मुडकर किसी को देखकर बोल उठा।

हे गुरुदेव, हे गुरुदेव, तेरी कृपा रहे। मैं सबकुछ हो सकता हूँ। सारे भरतखंड में घूमकर उसके हृदय को जान चुका। नूतन चेतनाशक्ति उसकी गहराई में छिप पडी है। उसे जगाने के लिये प्रयत्न करूँगा। कमर कसकर खडे हो जाऊँगा। राजाओं के महलों में वैठा हूँ। गरीबों की कुटियों में ज़मीन पर सोया हूँ। भारतमाता को पाँव से सिर तक पहचाना हूँ। इस महान समुद्र को पार करूँगा। पश्चिमदेश में जाऊँगा। मेरी मेघ शक्ति से धनार्जन करूँगा। माता के उद्धार का यत्न करूँगा। हे जननी सन्यासी धर्म के विरुद्ध होकर धन संचय करूँगा। दरिद्र-नारायणों का सेवा करूँगा। हे गुरुदेव तेरी कृपा दे। मेरा सहायक बन।

पक्षी चारों ओर मंडार रहे थे। उद्वेग कम होकर राजयोगी दृढ चित्त बन गया। मुख में दृढ रेखाएँ दीख पडीं। पुनः उसकी वाणी गरज उठी।

मेरा सन्यास! मेरा आत्मा कल्याण!! मेरी मुक्ति!!! छि! छि! स्वार्थता दूर हो जाओ। भरतखंड के उद्धार के लिये करोड जन्म लूँगा। दरिद्रनारायण की सेवा के लिये अपनी आत्मा-मुक्ति को न्योछावर करूँगा। जब तक एक मनुष्य भूखा रहेगा तब तक मैं सुख को स्वीकार न करूँगा। जब तक एक कीडा बन्धन में रहेगा तब तक मुझे मुक्ति न चाहिये। मातृ देवो भव। पितृदेवो भव। आतिथि देवो भव। नहीं नहीं। दरिद्र देवो भव। मूर्ख देवो भव। पापी देवो भव। मूर्ख, दरिद्र और पापी मेरे देवता हैं। मैं उनकी सेवा के लिये अपनी आत्मा को अर्पण करूँगा। गुरुदेव! गुरुदेव! सन्यासी जेल से छुटकारा

पाकर बाहर आये हुए कैदी की तरह आगे, पीछे घूमने लगा। नयन नवज्योति को प्रकट कर रहे थे। पुनः व्योम, समुद्र और भारत-वर्ष को देखकर पश्छिम की तरफ़ मुडकर खडा हुआ। कुछ देर ठहरकर बोलने लगा।

मैं आज समझ गया, मेरा जन्म उद्देश। पश्छिम देशों में जाऊँगा। वहां भोग में लीन हुए लोगों के हृदय में सनातन वेदधर्म की ज्योति को उत्पन्न करूँगा। भारतमाता को प्रणाम करके उसकी सेवा करने के लिये बीज बोऊँगा। उसकी दुर्गति को दूर करूँगा। भाव समाधि वहीं रहे। निर्विकल्प समाधि एक कोने में रहे। मेरी आत्मामुक्ति फिल्वक्त मुझे नहीं चाहिये। सच्चे धर्म को दुनिया में फैलाऊँगा। जग को जगाऊँगा। भरतखंड को ऊपर उठाऊँगा। हे जननी, पुण्यभूमि आर्य माते! वेदपूजिते, मुझे आशीर्वाद दो। हे गुरु देव, कृपा करो। मुझे शक्ति दो' सन्यासी फिर ध्यानमग्न हुआ। उसकी सुंदर, गंभीर मूर्ति को देखकर समुद्र ने प्रणाम किया। आकाश ने प्रणाम किया। देवताओं ने आशीर्वाद दिया। गुरु ने अपने मेघ शक्ति से शिष्यको वज्र बनाया। सन्यासी स्थिर रहा। उसकी आत्मा विश्व में संचार कर रही थी। समुद्र पक्षी एक दूसरे को देखकर विस्मय से गाने लगे . . . . .

वह कौन है? वह कौन है?

(स्वामी विवेकानन्द की जीवनी की एक झलक)